

Spring 5-16-2014

Emergent Bilinguals' Use of Social, Cultural, and Linguistic Resources in a Kindergarten Writing Workshop

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This dissertation, EMERGENT BILINGUALS' USE OF SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND LINGUISTIC RESOURCES IN A KINDERGARTEN WRITING WORKSHOP, by SANJUANA C. RODRIGUEZ, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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ABSTRACT

EMERGENT BILINGUALS' USE OF SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND LINGUISTIC RESOURCES IN A KINDERGARTEN WRITING WORKSHOP

by
Sanjuana C. Rodriguez

While many research studies have examined the early literacy development and experiences of monolingual children (e.g. Clay 1982, 1991, 2001; Dyson, 1984, 1993, 2003), there are few studies that investigate the early literacy development of young emergent bilingual students (Dworin & Moll, 2006; McCarthy et al., 2004; Moll, Saez, Dworin, 2001). Drawing on sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), 1995), critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2009; Taylor, 2009; Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2001) and ethic of care perspectives (Noddings, 1984), this case study examined emergent bilingual students' writing development during writing workshop in the context of an "English only" official curriculum. Questions guiding the study were: (1) How do emergent bilingual writers participate in writing events? (2) What social, cultural, and linguistic resources do emergent bilingual writers draw upon when engaged in the composing process? and (3) What impact do these resources have on emergent bilingual writers' understandings of the writing process?

Data sources included teacher, student, and parent interviews; field notes and transcripts of focal students' talk and interactions during the whole class mini-lessons and share sessions, individual writing time, and teacher/student writing conferences, and student writing samples. Constant Comparative approach (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser &

Strauss, 1965) was used to analyze the data. Findings from this study indicate that emergent bilingual students draw from rich social, cultural, and linguistic repertoires as they write. Findings also indicate that issues of power and agency play out as student position themselves within the group based on language proficiency. On the basis of this study, teachers can support students as they draw upon their rich resources by supporting talk in multiple languages in the classroom. This study also demonstrates how the politics of language education impact young students as they position themselves in the classroom based on access to linguistic resources. Implications for classroom practice include challenging deficit perspectives that fail to view students' home language and culture as a resource in learning. Teachers can support students as they draw upon their rich resources by encouraging talk and writing in multiple languages in the classroom. Further questions are raised about English only policies that deny students opportunities to engage in multilingual practices as they learn to read and write in classroom settings.

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Sanjuana C. Rodriguez

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Teaching and Learning
in
the Department of Middle and Secondary Education
in
the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia
2014

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I appreciate the teacher, Ms. Brown, for opening her classroom for me to conduct this study, talked with me about the focal students, and spent countless hours dedicated to her students. I am grateful to the families of the students who allowed me to listen, observe, and write about their children and families. I am grateful for the kindergarten children who invited me to be a part of their world and learn from them.

I am indebted to my dissertation committee: Dr. Laura May, Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs, and Dr. Tasha Tropp Laman for pushing my thinking and guiding me through the research process. I am especially grateful to Dr. Amy Seely Flint for her support and mentoring. I feel honored to have worked with you. Thank you for inspiring me to take a critical stance towards learning.

This dissertation would not have been possible with the love and support of my family and friends. Thank you to my friends Eliza Allen, Natasha Thornton, and Kamania Wynter-Hoyte and others for their friendship, support, and encouragement. To my brothers and sisters- Francisco, Maria, Dolores, and Fernando for their support and encouragement. Most importantly, I owe my deepest gratitude to my husband, Luis Rodriguez, who has always believed in me, and whose caring spirit and love has helped me throughout this process. Finally, I am thankful to my parents, Eulalia and Baltazar Carrillo for supporting me as I pursue my dreams and for teaching me the importance of hard work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A series of pivotal experiences set the course of action for my life. The experience of moving to a new country and learning a new way of being has shaped my identity and continues to influence the lens through which I view and experience the world around me. When I was eight years old, my mother told my siblings and I that we would be moving to the United States to be with my father. My father had been living in the United States for many years and traveling back and forth to see our family in Mexico. I remember the anticipation of spending every day with my father and thinking about all the exciting adventures my family would have in the U.S. My father found a small house for us to rent. Visions of a promised land soon became distant when I discovered what it would really be like for my family. We had very limited resources. I didn't understand the language that everyone spoke and the only people that I continued to communicate with were my family members.

My first day of school was a terrifying experience. I remember riding in the car with my father to see our new school and our new teachers. Those first few days of school were filled with mixed emotions. I began third grade without speaking a word of English. There was only one girl in my class who could translate for me. The school system where I attended bused all the students who were learning to speak English to another school. Every day during my first year of schooling in the United States, I was bused to another school for half of the day to receive English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction and was pulled out for most of the other half of the day to receive remedial classes. While some teachers saw potential in students like me, there

were others who adopted a deficit perspective and noted all the things that I was lacking as a student. By my second year of school, I no longer attended a different school for ESOL instruction. Yet, I was still taken out of my regular classroom for additional instruction in reading and math during the next school year. Although I didn't know this when I was a little girl, the instruction that I received during the day was due to the fact that I was considered a low academically progressing student, despite the fact that I had been a top student in Mexico. I suspect that part of the reason I was considered to be a low progressing student was because of my language and poverty background. I was seen as lacking the academic skills necessary to be successful in school, simply because I did not speak the language of instruction.

My experiences as a bilingual student prompted me to become a teacher. As I made decisions about where to teach, I decided to return to the district where I had began my schooling in the United States. As an early grades primary teacher, I began to see that although students are no longer bused to different schools to receive ESOL instruction, many of the students who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are still largely viewed from a deficit perspective. In an English-only official curriculum, the social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of many of the emergent bilingual students that I have taught and continue to teach are often overlooked.

Many emergent bilingual students also continue to be labeled with identifiers that mark them as deficient or lacking through the use of terms such as *Limited English Proficient* or *English Language Learner* (Gort & Bauer, 2012; Reyes, 2006). These terms position students as lacking something instead of recognizing their linguistic competencies as they learn to read and write. The term most commonly used, English

Language Learner, “devalues other languages and puts the English in a sole position of legitimacy” (Garcia, Klefgen, & Falchi, 2008, p. 7). For this reason, I have chosen to use the term *emergent bilingual* (García et al., 2008; Gort & Bauer, 2012; Reyes, 2006). The term emergent bilingual is used in this study to refer to “young children who speak a native language other than English and are in the *dynamic* process of developing bilingual and biliterate competencies, with the support of their communities” (Reyes, 2006). The term also views their bilingualism as an asset rather than a deficiency and positions this group of students as having potential instead of seeing them as deficient because they speak a different home language. In this study, many of the students have not yet developed conventional reading and writing competencies in either language, yet they are exposed to two languages and interactions with others in both languages will support them as they make sense of print (Reyes & Azuara, 2008).

Statement of the problem

The 2010 Census results show the dramatic increase in the number of Latino children in the United States. The population of Latino children increased from 17% in 2000 to 23% in 2010 accounting for 1 in 4 children in the U.S. (Frey, 2011). The number of bilingual students in the United States has been estimated to be greater than 14 million (August, 2006). Although 460 languages are spoken in classrooms in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), 76% of bilingual students speak Spanish as their home language (Escamilla, 2006; Leos & Saavedra, 2010). Historically, states such as Texas and California have had a large number of bilingual students, but the number of students who are bilingual is also increasing in states that have historically not educated a large population of bilingual students. States such as Nevada, North Carolina, Georgia,

Nebraska, Arkansas, Arizona, and South Dakota have seen a significant increase in bilingual students in pre-K through 12th grade setting (García, Arias, Murri, & Serna, 2010; García & Cuellar, 2006; Sox, 2009).

As previously noted, the state of Georgia has experienced considerable growth of students who are bilingual. Although there is some diversity, including native language and ethnic backgrounds among students who are considered bilingual, the majority of the students in Georgia are Latino/a. In fact, the state of Georgia has the 10th largest population of Latinos in the K-12 settings in the United States (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010). There are 64,028 students who are labeled as Limited English Proficient in the state of Georgia accounting for 4.1% of total student population in K-12 (Georgia Department of Education, 2011). Due to the growing number of bilingual students currently enrolled in K-12 settings and our limited understanding of their literacy development (August & Shanahan, 2006; García, 2000), it is imperative that researchers and educators continue to search for the best instructional practices to meet the needs of this group of students.

With the increase in the number of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse in schools in the United States (Fry & López, 2011; Gort & Bauer, 2012), there is a need to study students who are emergent bilinguals in different contexts over extended periods of time (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006). Students who speak a marginalized language, particularly Latinos, are underachieving in the United States when compared to White monolingual students (Nieto, 2002). According to a report issued by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2011), Latino students have increased performance over the last decade, but still continue to fall

behind in achievement in reading and math as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In reading, Latino students continue to lag behind White students nationwide by 25 points in fourth grade and 24 points in eighth grade. The report points to the growing number of students who are learning English as being part of the challenge to addressing this gap in NAEP scores (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011). In light of these statistics, it is imperative to pursue a research agenda devoted to the literacy development of Latino students

The literacy development of young children is an area that has been investigated, but our understanding of bilingual children's literacy development is still limited (August & Shanahan, 2006; García, 2000). While there are many research studies that have examined the early literacy development and experiences of monolingual children (e.g. Clay 1982, 1991, 2001; Dyson, 1984, 1993, 2003), there are few studies focused on studying the early literacy development of young students who are emergent bilinguals (Dworin & Moll, 2006; McCarthy et al., 2004; Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001). Several research studies have focused on the reading development of bilingual students from preschool to grade 12 (e.g. García, 2000), but few have focused on writing instruction (McCarthy et al., 2004). The knowledge about the development of emergent bilinguals is even more limited as it relates to the writing development and trajectories of very young students (Reyes, 2006). As classroom teachers face the challenge of serving a growing number of culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools, understanding the literacy development of emergent bilinguals is critical. Past studies have documented the reading development of bilingual students (García, 2000; Fitzgerald, 1995; Jiménez, 1997), yet less attention has focused on the writing

development and the context that support meaningful writing experiences. In order to better understand the literacy development of young children who are emergent bilinguals, it is important to address the writing development of this group of students.

With pressure for accountability and the policy demands to standardize instruction, teachers are faced with the task of preparing students to pass standardized tests (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Under directives from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools were encouraged to focus on reading and math while ignoring the writing and reading connection as well as students' rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Blake, 2001; McCarthy, 2008; Moll, 2001; Nagin, 2003). In a comprehensive study of NCLB and the narrowing of curriculum, the Center on Educational Policy (2007) found that 44% of schools that were part of the study reported taking time away from other subjects to focus on tested subjects. Many students from minority or poverty backgrounds are often taught using narrow and rigid models of writing instruction and are rarely provided with opportunities to use their first language (McCarthy, 2008; McCarthy, Lopez- Vasquez, García, Lin, & Guo, 2004; Moll, 1990). In her study of the impact of NCLB on writing instruction in high and low income schools, McCarthy (2008) also found that teachers, particularly in low-income schools, gave up writing time and opted to teach reading. The focus on testing in reading and math force teachers to concentrate solely on these subjects in order to prepare students to pass standardized tests. McCarthy (2004) also found that teachers from low-income schools followed packaged reading programs with tightly written schedules; whereas teachers from higher-income schools had more flexibility in teaching writing since these schools were likely to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

While NCLB policies focused heavily on reading and math achievement at the expense of embracing students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, several studies have documented how students build upon their cultural and linguistic knowledge to further academic competence (Au, 1993; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Furthering this premise, other studies have focused on building students' cultural and linguistic knowledge while focusing on writing. In presenting her conclusions from a ten-year study of her continuous work with teachers of bilingual students, Fu (2009) addresses the complexities of teaching writing to students learning a second language. With a focus on upper elementary and secondary students, Fu advocates for using emergent bilingual's home language to help them develop their writing in English. She also discusses how allowing students to use both languages when writing will help students in making the transition to writing in English. Additionally, she addresses the benefits of bilingualism in stating that bilingual students "compose from a bilingual frame of mind and perspective" (p. 119). Fu affirms that the use of multiple languages in writing will allow students to draw from a wider repertoire of resources that will support them as they acquire a second language.

In her study of one immigrant child's writing development over the span of three years, Van Sluys (2003) documents how a student was able to draw from her experiences of moving to a new country to compose during writing workshop. Van Sluys describes the learning environment that afforded the student opportunities to draw from her experiences and to use her linguistic repertoire to share her understandings of moving to a new country. In describing the classroom where this young student came to terms with herself as a writer, Van Sluys (2003) concludes that "classrooms that begin with

children's lives create spaces where children such as Wera write from the life that surrounds them, construct significant texts, and tell stories that invoke history, culture, and difference" (p. 183)

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is to contribute to the literature by exploring young emergent bilingual students' writing development during writing workshop in the context of an English only official curriculum. In particular, this study focuses on the social, cultural, and linguistic resources that young emergent bilingual students use when writing. Using a case study approach, this study is guided by the following questions:

1. How do emergent bilingual writers participate in writing events?
2. What social, cultural, and linguistic resources do young emergent bilingual writers draw upon when engaged in the composing process?
3. What impact do these resources have on young emergent bilingual writers' understandings of the writing process?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks that this study draws upon are sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), critical race theory (Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2001) and ethic of care (Noddings, 1984). Sociocultural theory has informed my conceptualization of language and literacy as a social construct. Culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and ethic of care place particular importance on valuing students' backgrounds and provide an environment that fosters

high expectations, particularly for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Latino critical race theory focuses on the experiences of Latino/a people and places importance on the voice of the participants.

Sociocultural Theory

I framed this study with a sociocultural view of learning. This perspective maintains that learning is socially and culturally developed (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). This theory of learning is “a radical departure from conventional viewpoints that posit learning as largely unaffected by context” (Nieto, 2006). Accepting this notion means that learning cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs. In the sociocultural perspective the view of the student, teacher, and the classroom are all focused on the social nature of knowledge. From this perspective, context is important. Classroom spaces are viewed as “complex communication spaces” (Gillen & Hall, 2003, p.8) where knowledge is constructed through student-to-student interactions as well as student-to-teacher (and vice versa) interactions. A classroom is a social context in itself due to the fact that the interactions between students and teachers are impacted by rules established in the classroom and the members in the class (Gillen & Hall, 2003). It is also important to note that classrooms and schools do not exist in isolation; instead they are a part of wider historical, cultural, social, and political spheres that permeate interactions that happen in classrooms.

Vygotsky’s (1978) theory also presented language as a mediational tool. Mediation suggests that “all human actions, both external and internal, exist in relation to other material and/or symbolic objects that are culturally and historically constructed to make meaning of the world” (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2003, p.39). All meaning making

occurs in situated contexts through interactions with others, thus writing is more than just learning to write words in isolation. When a child composes a message, the student relies on experiences and knowledge acquired in deciding what to write. A student uses these prior experiences, along with mediational tools available in that context to gain new understandings (Rogoff, 1990). Children also negotiate meaning with one another as they write and talk in the classroom. In describing the process that young students use when writing, Dyson (1993) states that

[Children] do not simply learn to draw speech, as Vygotsky (1978) emphasized; they learn to craft voices: guided by a history of past conversations, the child responds to the present social situation by drawing words on paper. Those words give voice to the child's intentions—but they are used words, linked to other voices in the child's world. (p. 80)

In their writing, students are guided by diverse experiences and draw on “familiar and typified voices” (Genishi & Dyson, 2009, p. 9). These familiar and typified voices are voices from children's everyday lives such as those of their families, friends, teachers, or technology, or media personalities (Dyson, 2006). Children depend on these voices as they serve as “guiding frames that inform children's efforts to appropriate, orchestrate, and adapt their experiential and symbolic resources in order to say something right” (Dyson, 2006, p. 35). Thus, talk and writing are interconnected by these voices and the children's appropriation of them. Children's talk is also connected to their complex world and; therefore, interwoven in their writing.

Central to this theory is also the belief that literacy is a social practice that is embedded in the cultural and social norms of communities. Cognition and learning are

not independent events, but rather they are grounded in the communities in which they exist (Lave & Wenger, 1991). One of the theoretical perspectives that views literacy in this way is the tradition that has been termed the “New Literacy Studies” (Gee 1991; Street, 1984). New Literacy Studies (NLS) focuses on “what it means to think of literacy as a social practice” (Street, 1984). Brian Street (1984; 2003) discusses how he has constructed this concept of literacy through the discussion of an “autonomous” versus an “ideological” model of literacy. An autonomous model of literacy assumes that literacy “will have effects on other cognitive and social factors. Regardless of the social and economic conditions” (Street, 2003, p.77). In this view, the assumption is that literacy itself can enhance a person’s life, regardless of circumstances. Street (2003) disagrees with the autonomous model because it presents literacy as being neutral and universal. Literacy viewed from a neutral and universal perspective is conceptualized as a set of cognitive skills and abilities. Instead Street (2003) offers the ‘ideological’ model as one that is a “more culturally sensitive view of literacy practices as they vary from one context to another” (p.77). In this model, literacy is a social practice and it varies from context to context. Moreover, the recognition of what Street (1995) refers to as “local literacies” acknowledges the experiences of students and views the knowledge as legitimate. As it relates to writing, the texts that students compose in the classroom are “grounded in, and thereby reflect, many of the specific literacy practices of their homes and communities” (Blake, 2001, p.439). Affording students many opportunities to talk, draw, and write about their experiences and validating their experiences in schools can provide a space where students’ local literacies are seen as a resource.

One of the central beliefs of the sociocultural perspective is the belief that culture cannot be separated from meaning making. Young children participate in different literacy experiences in their communities before entering school and they bring these experiences as they engage in literacy activities in school. A line of inquiry that has emerged from the sociocultural perspective is funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, Gonzalez, 1992). This work is based on Vygotsky's (1978) cultural-historical psychology and the premise of his work is that "people are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, p.ix). Although the children may appear passive by receiving the knowledge in classrooms, in households the same children are "active participants in a broad range of activities mediated by social relationships" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 134). Children participate in a broad range of activities in and outside the home. From birth, human beings are socialized into certain cultural practices, those practices shape how a person thinks, develops, and interacts in all contexts. Moll and his colleagues define funds of knowledge as being "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005, p.72). Examples include cooking, shopping, home and car repair, participation in religious activities, and participation in sports. The work of Moll and his colleagues provides a framework for seeing different types of knowledge in students' homes as a resource. In these studies, teachers became ethnographers and were able to discover funds of knowledge that exist in students' homes. Through the purposeful discovery of funds of knowledge, teachers were then able to shape the curriculum in their classrooms and acknowledge, value, and use the different

types of knowledge that students bring to the classroom (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

In the study of household knowledge, Amanti, a classroom teacher, shares her experiences of going in the field for the first time and learning about her students' knowledge through conducting interviews and observations in the home (Moll et al., 1992). Amanti discovers that one of her students, Carlos, had many experiences in cross-border activities such as going back to live in Mexico in the summers and participating in the family business of importing and exporting major appliances. She also finds that Carlos is also involved in selling candy from Mexico. After reflecting on the funds of knowledge in the home and her own understanding of the fractured stereotypes (Moll et al., 1992) she found to be inaccurate, Amanti developed a theme of study to use in her classroom. These fractures stereotypes were understandings of Latino families that portrayed them as having a lack of discipline, low value on education, and dysfunctional homes. With her new understanding about the family's funds of knowledge, she was able to design a unit of inquiry that used the funds of knowledge of the making and selling of candy. Recent research studies (Dworin, 2006; Taylor, Bernhard, Garg, & Cummins, 2008; Tan & Barton, 2010) continue to corroborate the idea that tapping into students' funds of knowledge can build on the cultural and linguistic strengths of students.

Embracing a sociocultural perspective also means rejecting the notion that there is a single outcome or path to developing literacy or biliteracy (De la Luz Reyes, 2001). As students develop conventional competencies in reading and writing, they are doing so within layers of different contexts that shapes their understanding of these literacies. De la Luz Reyes (2001) explains that those contexts can include the view of literacy and

language held in the community, the school that the student attends, and the classroom context in which the learning takes place. Those different social contexts influence the outcomes of individual student's literacy development. Therefore, it is important to note that students may have different outcomes relating to language and literacy and that these outcomes are shaped by broader contexts.

Identity. According to Gee (2000), identity is being recognized as a certain “kind of person” in given context. The sociocultural perspective views context as important and views the learner, in the case of this study emergent bilingual students, as “apprenticing to the requisite linguistic, academic, and social practices of school” (Hawkins, 2004, p. 14). Therefore, identities do not develop in isolation. Instead, identities are shaped by interactions with the context and with others. Identities can change and are dependent on the different context and the interactions that occur within these spaces. Thus, identities can change from situation to situation and from moment to moment. Hawkins contends that identities should not be viewed as fixed, but instead they should be understood as “changing, fluid, and multiple” (Hawkins, 2004). Gee asserts that “...all people have multiple identities connection not their ‘internal states’ but to their performance in society” (Gee, 2001, p. 99).

Classrooms become social spaces in which students continually negotiate and renegotiate identities. Teachers play a key role and can greatly impact students' identities. Certain values and beliefs exist within the classroom context and students “interact within a social setting that privileges certain ways of using language, thinking, and interacting with others” (Hawkins, 2005, p. 62). Teachers can affirm students' identities by acknowledging and using the funds of knowledge that students from different cultural

backgrounds bring to the classroom, including language. Identity is an important factor in learning a new language (Norton, 2000). Students who are learning to speak a new language are often labeled as at-risk or academically low early on in their schooling (Hawkins, 2005). Therefore, students are not only learning a new language, but they are also learning the “sociocultural competence to successfully negotiate an identity as a ‘learner’ in school that will be recognized and accepted” (Hawkins, 2004, p. 21).

Critical Race Theory

This study also draws upon Critical Race Theory (Taylor, 2009) with a specific focus on Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). For the purpose of this study, I drew on the definition that views CRT in education as “a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009). Critical Race Theory is a framework that began in the field of law and that addressed the issues of race in the United States (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, and Solorzano (2001) have identified five themes that inform this theory in field of education:

(1) The intercentricity of race and racism. The first theme is the belief in the central and intersecting roles of race and racism. This first theme begins with the idea that racism exists in society and that race is at the center of any critical race theory analysis (Solorzano, 1997).

(2) The challenge to the dominant ideology. The second theme challenges claims in education such as color-blindedness, objectivity, and meritocracy (Yosso et al., 2001).

Critical race theory challenges the dominant ideology by telling the stories of marginalized populations.

(3) The commitment to social justice. The third theme is the commitment to social justice and providing a voice for minority groups that have been marginalized and underrepresented. The commitment to social justice is the motivation for critical race theory research (Hayes & Juarez, 2012).

(4) The centrality of experiential knowledge. The fourth theme acknowledges the knowledge and experiences held by those marginalized groups and views this knowledge as valuable and legitimate.

(5) The interdisciplinary perspective. The last theme views critical race theory draws from different disciplines, research approaches, and fields and that this is strength because it allows researchers to analyze racism in different ways (Yosso et al., 2001). This theory borrows from other traditions including liberalism, feminism, and Marxism (Hayes & Juarez, 2012)

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy. Several studies have documented how students are able to achieve at higher levels of literacy when their backgrounds are valued, instruction is used as a bridge between their world and school, and when opportunities are provided for students to build on what they already know (e.g. Au, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). These studies demonstrate how culture is of pedagogical value and how it can be a vehicle for success

for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The instructional practices used in these studies stem from philosophical constructs that seek to address issues related to language and culture while holding high expectations of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

This framework for educating students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is the theory that is most popularly attributed to Ladson-Billings' (1994, 1995) work with African American students. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is a framework that allows classroom teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. Ladson-Billings (1994) defines it as "a pedagogy that empowers student intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (p. 18). CRP accepts the notion that all students have culturally relevant knowledge that they bring to the classroom. In this view, knowledge is something that is created. The different types of knowledge that the students bring to the classroom are valued and students are viewed as having something to contribute, "what they know is acknowledged, valued, and incorporated into the classroom" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p.95). This type of teaching also acknowledges and takes into account individual student differences. Another key tenet of CRP is the learning community that must be established (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Through establishing a sense of family in the classroom, students are able to take risks while feeling supported. Students are encouraged to collaborate with each other and learn from each. Ladson-Billings (2009) states that students must "feel a part of a collective effort designed to encourage academic and cultural excellence" (p. 82). CRP can serve as a way for teachers of emergent bilinguals to provide support by meeting their cultural needs as well as supporting them as they

acquire a new language. This framework also allows teachers to create classrooms where cultural and linguistic diversity are valued. CRP can be applied to all contents or subject areas to successfully teach all students (Hayes & Juarez, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the teaching of writing to young Emergent Bilinguals.

Latino Critical Race Theory. Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) also informs this study. LatCrit theory draws and builds on the CRT framework, but also expands this theory to focus on the education of Latina/o students. Specifically, it focuses on the notions of deficit perspectives and challenges the objectivity of such notions. I used the following definition of LatCrit:

The LatCrit theory in education is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact on the educational structures, processes, and discourses that effect people of color generally and Latinas/os specifically. Important to this theory is a challenge to the dominant ideology, which supports deficit notions about students of color assuming “neutrality” and “objectivity” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009, pp. 144)

LatCrit theory is a fairly new theory, but the number of research studies in the field of education is growing (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Delgado-Bernal & Solórzano, 2001; Fernandez, 2002; Valdes, 1998; Yosso, 2006). Ferndandez (2002) conducted a study focused on high school students’ educational experiences. Fernandez (2002) describes Pablo’s story about his struggles as a student in the Chicago school system. By focusing on telling Pablo’s story through his words, Fernandez describes the system that did not provide the structures to support Pablo as he progressed through school.

By recounting the stories of young emergent bilingual students and challenging the deficit notions about these students, this study was able to use a LatCrit lens to identify and acknowledge the social, cultural, and linguistic resources that students utilize when writing. Additionally, the voices and interactions of the student were of particular importance as a LatCrit framework advocates for placing the marginalized participant at the center of the analysis (Fernandez, 2002)

Ethic of Care

This study is framed within a care theory perspective. Interactions between students and teachers and among students themselves are crucial in the classroom. An ethic of care perspective “is one of the major pillars of culturally responsive pedagogy for ethnically diverse students” (Gay, 2000, p. 45). Noddings (1984) described an ethic of care as being a part of a reciprocal relationship. Her understanding of this emphasizes that there is the “one caring” and one being “cared for.” There is also an understanding that the “one caring” is related closely to that individual that is being “cared for.” Therefore, teaching from this perspective is a personal process in which there is a relationship based on trust between the teacher and student (Ennis & McCauley, 2002). With this understanding, educators must acknowledge the importance of knowing and caring for individual students and recognizing difference. Noddings (2002) describes this by stating that “the objective of care shifts with the situation and also with the recipient. Two students in the same class are roughly in the same situation, but they may need very different forms of care from their teacher” (2002, p. 20). Thus, part of caring involves knowing the students’ needs and responding to those needs in ways that will help students. Noddings (1992) also describes the concept of care as essentially being a “way

of being in relation, not a specific set of behaviors” (p.17). In classrooms, teachers demonstrate what it means to care about students in the actions that they take and in doing so they are modeling the concept of care.

An ethic of care framework characterizes caring as more than just establishing relationships with students. More than just relationships, an ethic of care contends that student success is due to teachers who have high expectations of students (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006) Several studies have focused on how caring relationships or having an ethic of care as it relates to Latino/a students can help those students to be academically successful in schools (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006; De Jesús & Antrop-González, & Nieto, 2008; Rolón-Dow, 2005;Valenzuela, 1999).

Part of establishing a caring community is creating an environment that supports and encourages caring attitude. In their study of two high schools located in predominantly Latino communities, Antrop-Gonzalez and De Jesus (2006) investigated how teachers practiced what the researchers term as “critical care.” Their study demonstrated the importance of high expectation for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The researchers concluded that high expectations helped students know that they were cared for. Thus, critical care in classrooms involves both building relationships with students and providing an environment that expects students to do well academically. Antrop-Gonzalez and De Jesus (2006) contend that when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, teachers should seek opportunities to help students reach their full potential instead of lowering expectations for students. They also maintain that part of caring for students involves getting to know the “cultural and social realities” (p. 291) of students in order to help them be academically successful in school. By tapping

into the students' funds of knowledge, teachers can use resources from the students' lives to shape the curriculum and therefore acknowledge students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This can also lead teachers to affirm their commitment to instruction and curriculum that affirms and builds on students' identities. This type of classroom curriculum, coupled with authentic relationships with the teacher and other students, helps students to know that they are a part of a learning community that both cares and has high expectations.

Summary

In this study, I draw from socio-cultural theory, critical race theory, and, ethic of care to study the writing development of emergent bilingual students in a kindergarten classroom. In this chapter, I have stated the issues related to emergent bilingual students' writing and the need to continue to study the trajectories of these students. I have also discussed the growing demographics and how my own experiences as a bilingual student have shaped my research interest. The remainder of this study is organized into the following four chapters. Chapter two focuses on reviewing the literature related to emergent bilinguals and their literacy development. Chapter three focuses on the discussion on the research design and the methodology of this study. Chapter four provides a detailed description of the classroom context in which this study took place. Chapter five focuses on the analysis of the data and findings. Finally, chapter six provides conclusions, limitations of the study, and implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The number of emergent bilingual students in U.S. schools continues to grow. Therefore, schools must make provisions to better educate this group of students. The research in this area has gained momentum in the last two decades due to the interest in learning about ways to educate students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Reyes, 2012). Recent research focused on emergent bilinguals' centers on adolescent or college level emerging bilingual students writing practices (Harklau & Pinnow, 2009; Matsuda, 2003). In this literature review, I discuss the education context for emergent bilinguals and the policies that have shaped this context. Next, I review research related to emergent bilinguals and biliteracy research. This discussion includes a discussion of studies that have found how students' native language can be used as a resource. Furthermore, studies related to emergent bilinguals and writing are discussed. Finally, I review the literature related to teaching students who are culturally and linguistically diverse, including studies related to culturally relevant pedagogy and funds of knowledge. As previously discussed, use the term emergent bilinguals to refer to students who are in the process of developing two or more languages.

Bilingualism

There are varying definitions about what it means to be bilingual. Grosjean (2010) defines bilinguals as "those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives" (p. 4). Baker (2011) conceptualizes bilingualism as something that is more complex and "it is not as simple as having two wheels or two eyes" (p. 4). Instead he

describes several dimensions of bilingualism: ability, use, balance of language, age, development, culture, context, and elective bilingualism. In describing ability, Baker (2011) describes how there are different varied abilities in the knowledge of language. The use of language refers to the use of the different languages in different contexts in which they are learned and used. Baker also describes how one language is typically dominant over the other language. The age in which a second or third language is learned also impacts a person's bilingualism. While for some people, language learning is simultaneous, for other bilingualism may develop sequentially due to the age in which a second language is learned. The development of language learning also varies according to the individual. For example, a person may know one language well and may be in the early stages of learning a different language. Baker (2011) also articulates how culture cannot be separated from language and how the individuals who are bilingual also tend to be bicultural or multi-cultural. In the US for example, immigrant students who arrive are not only learning a new language, but they are also in the process of acculturation. Central to becoming bilingual is also the context of where a second language is learned. The context may encourage abandonment of the first language. Some areas or context may view bilingualism from an additive perspective and may recognize that a person can learn a new language while maintaining their first language.

Although there are a growing number of bilingual students in the United States, being bilingual is still largely viewed from a monolingual perspective (Baker, 2011; Garcia, 2009). Bilingual students in the United States are viewed from a deficit perspective and are denied language instruction that builds on their native language. The following sections detail the history, policy, and politics of bilingualism in the United

States. Additionally, the different groups of bilingual students are described and benefits of bilingualism are also considered.

History, Policy, and Politics

The increase in immigration demographics in the United States has made finding the best way to educate bilingual students urgent. There has been a long history of controversy regarding the best instructional methods for teaching students who are learning English, “the use of non-English languages for instructional purposes in the U.S. has been controversial since the early 18th century, with alternating cycles of acceptance and rejection depending on the relationship of the U.S. with the countries from which immigrants came” (Gandara et.al, 2010, p. 22). In 1968 the federal government enacted the Bilingual Education Act in an effort to “aid and monitor the education of English Language Learners” (Ovando, 2003, p. 8). The act provided funds to programs that supported language learning, but it did not take a position on the methods of English instruction.

In 1974, a group of Chinese parents in San Francisco brought forth a suit on the basis of discrimination because their children did not understand what the teachers were saying. *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision ruled that the San Francisco school board was violating Chinese-speaking students’ rights to equal education under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Losen, 2010). The San Francisco school system had to provide the students with “access to the same curriculum as their English speaking peers” by providing supplemental education in English instruction (Losen, 2010, p. 196). The court ruled “districts must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students” (Lau v. Nichols, 1974). The Equal

Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) passed by Congress after the *Lau* decision extended the order to all schools. The *Lau* decision made states responsible for providing equal opportunities to students learning English. However, it did not specify the method for providing English instruction, “it did not prescribe specific curricular content or methodology to restore the civil rights of the students in question” (Losen, 2010, p. 9).

Since the 1980’s, the controversy on the best way to teach English has shifted to the need to provide instruction through English-only programs. The rhetoric in the last 30 years has been in support of “sink or swim” methods where students are placed in classrooms and expected to learn English with no additional support. The attempts to do this can be seen in the passing of Proposition 227 in California in 1998, which required that instruction was to be in English (Ovando, 2003, p. 13). Additionally, thirty states have enacted legislation or constitutional amendments that make English the “official” language of the state (Crawford, 2004).

The English-only movement continues to rise with “increasing immigration, rising numbers of EL’s , and a ‘close the borders’ mentality gripping the nation” (Gándara et.al, 2010, p. 26). In fact all of the references to bilingual education were removed in reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which became the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. The Office of Bilingual Education also renamed to the office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (Gándara et al, 2010, p. 26).

Bilingual Students

While emergent bilinguals are developing their oral language competencies in both languages, they are often also developing their written literacy in English and Spanish (Garcia et al., 2008; Reyes, 2006). Biliteracy is defined by Perez and Torres-Guzman (1996) as “the acquisition and learning of the decoding and encoding of and around print using two linguistic and cultural systems in order to convey messages in a variety of texts” (p. 54). This definition of biliteracy takes into account how reading and writing development are influenced by the linguistic system. It also recognizes how reading and writing are embedded in the cultural practices and how the cultural system plays a part in a child’s literacy development.

Although bilingual students are a group of students who speak two or more languages, there are differences in this group that can help us understand their different needs. In their study of bilingual students, Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) and Yvonne and David Freeman (2002) discuss three different types of emergent bilinguals. In doing so, they also stress that this group of students is not a homogenous group, but that recognizing the different groups can help educators determine how their experiences impact their education. The three groups of students that they describe are: *adequate formal schooling*, *limited formal schooling*, and *long-term*. Students in the adequate formal schooling group have a strong educational background and are able to apply their academic knowledge to the learning of a new language. Freeman and Freeman (2002) describe students in the limited formal schooling group as students who have arrived to the U.S. within the last five years. This group of students has received interrupted or limited schooling in their home country and has limited literacy in their native language.

Students in this group are not able to draw upon the resources of a first language in learning a new language and therefore struggle in school. Long-term bilinguals are the largest group of emergent bilinguals. These are students who may have started school in the United States, but still lack academic language and are at risk for school failure (Olsen, 2010). Long-term bilinguals have been in U.S. schools for 7 or more years and yet they are below grade level in reading and writing. This group of students has strong oral skills in English, but have low literacy levels in both English and their native language (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2003). In a study of secondary Long-term bilingual students in California, Olsen (2010) identified factors that have contributed to the growing number of long-term bilingual students. Among those are: unprepared teachers, students being kept in classes for newcomers, a narrowed curriculum with lack of access to content subjects such as science and social studies for this group of students, and inappropriate placement in mainstream classrooms.

In addition to these three groups of students, Freeman and Freeman (2009) have identified a new group of bilingual students. Potential long-term bilingual students are emergent bilingual students who are in danger of becoming long-term bilinguals. These are students who are currently being denied the opportunity to be instructed through using their native language. They also begin their schooling speaking a language other than English and arrive to school in grades K-2. Factors that may impact educational success for this group include low parent education, English-only instruction, low levels of reading and writing. Freeman and Freeman (2009) make the argument that this group of students must be afforded the opportunity to use their native language in order to acquire the academic language required to be successful in school. This study particular

population has the potential to be in this category due to the English-only policies that deny these students from using their native language.

Benefits of Bilingualism

Although historically bilingual students have largely been viewed from a deficit perspective, there are many advantages associated with being bilingual. The benefits of being bilingual include cognitive and social advantages. In a society that is becoming increasingly globally connected, speaking, writing, and reading more than one language has many benefits.

One of the benefits of bilingualism is the cognitive advantage. Peal and Lambert's (1962) seminal work focused on bilingual students living in Montreal. It is one of the first studies to document the cognitive advantages of being bilingual. Peal and Lambert (1962) concluded that the 10 year old bilingual students in their study were "more facile at concept formation, and have greater mental flexibility" (p. 22) than the monolingual students. Recent studies (Bialystok, 2004, 2005,2010; Bialystok & Barac, 2011; Hakuta, 2011) have also focused on the cognitive abilities of bilingual students. Bialystok and Barac (2011) conducted two studies that focused on the metalinguistic ability of bilingual students. Both studies reported that bilingual students had a metalinguistic advantage. In discussing this advantage in an earlier study, Bialystok (2004) states that:

Sometimes, bilingual children excel in specific tasks that measure their progress in coming to understand the structure of language and in learning how to read but there is little evidence that their overall achievement in these skills is significantly different from that of monolinguals. Instead, their advantages make it easier to

master these skills by giving them more refined cognitive process by which to approach them with (p. 597-598).

Students' bilingualism in itself is not what gives students the cognitive advantage; rather it is the refined processes of knowing the language structure of two languages that gives bilingual students an advantage.

Other advantages related to bilingualism are related to the social development of individuals who speak more than one language. Bilingualism not only has cognitive advantages, but it also serves as a resource in the complexity of the modern world. In today's globalized world, bilingualism includes socioeconomic benefits for some (Garcia, 2009). Speaking more than one language can help students in future endeavors such as finding a job. Being bilingual is also an asset as technology has allowed for communication with others both at the local and the global level (Garcia, 2009). Students who are bilingual have an advantage as it relates to global interactions with others. Just as important, bilingual students are able to have local interactions with others in their home and community.

Educational Programs for Emergent Bilinguals

In the United States, there are many different kinds of educational programs for emergent bilingual students. These programs range in levels of support for students' native language. Despite the research that supports bilingual education, over the last four decades, educational programs for emergent bilingual students have shifted from a support from considering students' language in learning English to programs that

emphasize English only instruction (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). A description of the most widely used instructional program models and approaches will follow.

Submersion. The first approach is known as *submersion* or *sink or swim* method. This type of approach was widely used before the 1970's and are still being used in some areas today (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010) The goal of this approach is linguistic assimilation, or "the acquisition of English language skills so that the language-minority child can succeed in an English-only mainstream classroom" (Cazden, 1992). This method was widely used before the 1970's in the United States and is still used in many classrooms (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). In this program, students receive the same type of instruction that monolingual students receive and there is no support in students' native language. Students placed in this type of program may experience anxiety or frustration

English as a Second Language (ESL). The English as a Second Language approach allows students learning a second language to receive limited support from an ESL teacher. In this type of program, students remain in the regular classroom. Students may be pulled out of the classroom to receive instruction or support (pullout ESL) for 30-45 minutes. Student may also remain in the classroom and receive support given by an ESL teacher who works with the regular classroom teacher (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). Students can remain in this program as much as needed.

Structured Immersion (Sheltered English). A structured immersion model of learning English is a model that allows students to learn content in a protected way. Teachers using Structured Immersion programs provide students with different techniques that help students learn English. Some of those techniques include connections to student

experiences, targeted vocabulary, slower speech, use of visuals, use of demonstration, and use of supplementary materials (Short & Echeverria, 2004). Students are taught in English and t “The basic premise behind this particular model is that ELL students should be taught the English language quickly so they can then succeed academically” (Rios-Aguilar, Gonzalez Canche, & Moll, 2012).

Equity Issues in Education of Emergent Bilinguals

Across the United States, the growing number of emergent bilinguals has led states that have traditionally educated mostly monolingual students to find ways to address the educational needs of bilingual students. There are numerous equity issues that impact the education of emergent bilinguals. These issues arise from what Garcia et al. (2008) describe as a “growing disconnect between the research and the inappropriate educational programs” (p. 46). The educational contexts for these students are shaped by wider social and political perspectives. In this section, the enacting of English only policies are described. Other equity issues include the disproportionate number of emergent bilingual students that live in poverty and the lack of training for teachers working with emergent bilingual students. Lastly, the prescriptive nature of curriculum located in many schools with high numbers of emergent bilinguals and the policy directives that shape literacy instruction for this group of students are also addressed.

English Only Policies

Language of instruction has been a widely contested topic due to the dwindling support for bilingual education in the United States. In their meta-analysis of research studies related to second-language students, August and Shanahan (2006) state that there

is evidence suggesting that tapping into first language literacy can have advantages for reading in English. This is when the instruction is compared to English only models. In her criticism of the report presented by August and Shanahan (2006), Escamilla (2009) states that the authors of the report dismiss their own findings because the chapter they present is “framed with a monolingual orientation, as evidenced by the absence of any discussion of the benefits of bilingualism or biliteracy” (p. 437). Although several studies have documented the benefits of bilingual education, such as developing children’s language skills, building academic achievement, and positive identity (Cummins, 1996, Jimenez, 1997; Hakuta, 2011), children are still being deprived of the opportunity to obtain complete academic and cognitive developments and inevitably not being given the tools to succeed. Hakuta (2011) suggests that “bilingualism could have cognitive advantages” (p. 164). He also points out that despite the sound theory supporting bilingual education, the politics surrounding this issue continue to prevent many students from being a part of bilingual education programs.

Today, most bilingual students attend schools with restrictive language policies that do not allow them to use their native language (Gándara, 2000; Garcia & Curry-Rodriguez, 2000; Linton, 2007). Emergent bilinguals are placed in mainstream classrooms where they are faced with learning a new language and simultaneously learning to read and write in English. Students receive limited support through educational programs such as ESOL pullout or structured immersion programs, but many bilingual students who demonstrate oral proficiency are often exited from these programs under the assumption that the students have full command of the English language due to speak conversational English (Grant & Wong, 2003).

Teaching Force

A key factor that impacts the educational achievement of bilingual students are the teachers that facilitate instruction. Teachers have a great influence on the academic achievement of students. Darling-Hammond (2000) has identified the following general qualities of effective teachers: strong intelligence and verbal abilities, strong content knowledge, knowledge on how to develop higher order thinking, understanding of learning development, teacher experience, and adaptive expertise that allows the teacher to make decisions based on students needs. Darling-Hammond (2000) concludes that there is a “strong, significant relationship of teacher quality variables to student achievement” (p. 23). This analysis also concludes that student characteristics, such as poverty or the label of being an English Learner, are negatively correlated to the qualifications of teachers. In addition to this, it is important to note that the growing diversity in students is not reflected in the teacher demographics. Emergent bilinguals are being educated by a teaching force of predominantly White, monolingual, and female (Boser, 2011). During the 2007-2008 school year, eighty-three percent of full-time teachers were White, 7 percent were Black, 7 percent were Hispanic, and 1 percent were Asian (Aud et al., 2012). In comparison to this, the number of students from diverse backgrounds continues to grow in U.S. schools.

The demographics of the teaching force in Georgia are similar to the national statistics. In the state of Georgia, 74% of teachers are White, 23% are Black, 1% are Latino, Asian and 2% are multiracial (The Governor’s office of Student Achievement, 2010). With the majority of the ELL students in Georgia speaking Spanish as their native language, the likelihood that they will have a teacher who speaks their language is very

small. In a study describing the educational barriers for Latino students in Georgia, Bohon, MacPherson, and Atilas (2005) suggest that the lack of bilingual and bicultural staff is one of the key barriers contributing to the bleak academic success of Latino students in the state of Georgia. Additionally, only four states in the U.S. require that preservice teachers take specific courses that focus on teaching English as a second language (ESL) or to acquire ESL certification. The state of Georgia is not one of those states. (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2008).

While the number of bilingual students has grown considerably, the teaching force is not adequately prepared to work with this growing group of linguistically diverse students (Alford & Niño, 2011; Walker, Shaefer, & Liams, 2004). A study conducted by De Cohen, Deterding, and Clewell (2005) examined the characteristics of teachers who teach in schools with a high concentration of bilingual students. Their study indicates that teachers and principals at schools with large numbers of emergent bilinguals tended to be less experienced and also have fewer credentials than those at schools with few or no emergent bilinguals. An indicator of this is the highest degree held by the teachers. In schools with high numbers of emergent bilinguals, 33 percent of teachers hold masters degrees compared to 45 percent of teachers in schools with low number or no emergent bilinguals (De Cohen, Deterding, and Clewell, 2005).

Several studies (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lesnki, Ehlers-Zavala, Daniel, & Sun-Irminger, 2006; Walker et al., 2004; Yoon, 2008) have documented how teachers' perceptions of ELL students impact the interactions and instruction provided to students learning English. In their study of K-12 teachers, Walker et al. (2004) discovered that many teachers held negative or neutral perceptions about ELL students. The researchers

found that 70% of the teachers participating in the study were not interested in having ELL students in their classrooms and 20% of teachers refused to adapt their instruction to meet the needs of ELL students. The researchers also identified five factors contributing to the negative perception of students: Time and teacher burden; lack of training; the influence of negative administrator attitudes; myths that teachers have about educating ELL students; and relying on common sense or good teaching to teach ELL students. Walker et al. (2004) recommends that teachers receive professional development that will allow teachers to learn about students' cultures as well as learn about pedagogy and best practices in working with ELL students. This recommendation is supported by the findings from their study that indicate that 87% of teachers participating in the study had never received any professional development related to working with ELL students.

Socio-economic context

Bilingual students are a heterogeneous group that varies in racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Klinger, et al, 2005). Although there is much diversity within Latino bilingual students, this group of students share some similar characteristics. Garcia and colleagues (2008) identify some generalizations about Latino bilingual students. Some of commonalities are that:

Most ELLs are Spanish speaking, most are poor; most live in households in which no one over the age of 14 is a speaker of English; most live in urban areas; half live with parents who have not completed eight years of schooling, half were born in the United States (p. 17)

While language is an important factor to consider, other factors that also impact the educational achievement of bilingual students must be taken into account. The socio-economic context in which student greatly impacts the academic achievement of students (Garcia, Jensen, Scribner, 2009). Even though the socio-economic contexts of student alone do not determine whether they are successful or not, it is an important variable to consider.

Although variability exists within this group, bilingual students tend to come from families with low-socioeconomic backgrounds (Capps et al., 2005; Garcia & Cuellar, 2006). Bilingual students are also likely to have parents who have limited formal education (Capps et al., 2005). Under the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), low-income students were identified by eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. This identification was determined using family incomes. Low-income children are those children whose families earn an income below twice the federal poverty level (Capps et al, 2005). Under this same measure, schools are divided into categories depending on the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Schools are either considered a low poverty school (25% or less of students are eligible) or high poverty school (76% of students are eligible) (Aud et al., 2012). According to a U.S. Department of Education report by Aud and colleagues (2012), about 39% of Latino students attended schools that are considered high poverty schools compared to 6% of White students. This percentage is even higher when only elementary students are accounted. In 2009-2010, 45% of Latino elementary aged students attended schools considered to be high poverty schools compared to 7% of White students. In considering these statistics, some studies suggest that students who attend high-poverty schools tend to acquire English at a slower

rate than bilingual students who attend schools with more resources (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Jepsen and de Alth, 20005)

The way that poverty is contextualized for teacher is also an issue. Students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds are often labeled as deficient. Books such as Ruby Payne's book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* depicts students who are poor as deficient in language, cognition, and worldview, among others. Payne fails to acknowledge that the access of opportunities that are available to different groups varies. She also does not address the "ways in which schools and society have been structured in the interest of the dominant classes" (Bomer, Dworin, May, and Semingson, 2008, p.2508). By not addressing these issues in her work, Payne leads the reader (mostly teachers) to assume that poverty is a result of an individual's lack of effort.

Standardized and Prescribed Curriculum

The growing number of students who are bilingual and low-income has implications for the type of curriculum that is used in schools where many of these students attend. According to Capps et al. (2005), students who are bilingual are more likely to be a part of an ethnic/racial minority group. It is also important to note that schools that serve students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are often the schools where teachers are required to use prescribed curriculum and assessments (Flores-Deñas, 2005; Woodside-Jiron & Gehsmann, 2009).

Many bilingual students attend schools where the curriculum is highly prescribed and often emphasize a narrow conceptions of what it means to read and write. Under the policies of No Child Left Behind, many schools that serve low-income students were

forced to adopt highly scripted programs that were labeled as stemming from a “scientifically-based research” perspective (Cummins, 2007). One of the consequences of NCLB involved the disseminating grants to schools under Reading First. These grants were given to schools that primarily served low-income students, and in turn schools had to use a core-reading program that had been deemed as “scientifically based” (Gerstl-Pepin & Woodside-Jiron, 2005). These programs were highly scripted and had a heavy emphasis on phonics skills (Cummins, 2007). NCLB assumes that failing schools would be able to meet the academic needs of students by adopting ‘scientifically based’ instructional methods that focused on discrete skills of reading (Gerstl-Pepin & Woodside-Jiron, 2005). However, there are those who continue to look for reasons why large numbers of low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse students continue to underachieve under NCLB (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gerstl-Pepin & Woodside-Jiron). Gerstl-Pepin and Woodside-Jiron (2005) note that federal policies such as NCLB fail to recognize how other inequalities may impact student achievement. These prescriptive programs view students as being empty slates and ignore the varied experiences that they have with reading and writing (Goodman, 1990) and “intimately connected to these reductive literacy practices are high stakes assessment programs that measure discrete skills as reading tasks (Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002, p. 434). These tests are used for a variety of reasons such as placement or promotion to the next grade level and eligibility for special services (Gutierrez, et al., 2002).

Additionally, these policies have also established the use of standardized testing as the only way to measure achievement. The No Child Left Behind Act was put into law partly targeting the closing of the achievement gap, particularly for low-income students

(Allington et al., 2010). One of the issues pertaining to students who are learning a new language is that under NCLB, students are exempted from taking the test only during their first year of learning English (Cummins, 2011). Although several studies have documented that it takes up to five years for students to learn the academic English necessary to be as academically successful as their native English-speaking peers (Cummins, 1981; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000).

One of the consequences of this narrowing of the curriculum includes the lack of authentic writing instruction for students (McCarthy, 2008). Spending prolonged amounts of time preparing to take high stakes tests leaves little time for writing instruction. Researchers have found that students tend to have positive views of writing when provided with time to write with a purpose and an audience in mind (McCarthy, 2002; Townsend & Fu, 1998). In her study of the impact of NCLB on writing instruction in Illinois and Utah, McCarthy (2008) found that teachers used varied methods of teaching writing, but they were all aware of the pressures of high stakes testing and viewed “NCLB as a repressive means of regulating curriculum through the technology of testing” (p. 499). In order to understand the writing development of young emergent bilingual students, this study documented students’ engagement in authentic writing instruction. This study included students who did not take high stakes standardized test; however, required to take the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (G-KIDS). G – KIDS is a yearlong performance based assessment administered by the teacher.

Emergent Bilinguals and Factors that Influence Achievement

In addition to the equity issues that impact emergent bilinguals, there are factors that directly impact second language learning. Factors such as home environment, language of instruction in the classroom, quality of instruction, and time can all influence the attainment and proficiency in learning a second language. It is important to recognize and study these factors due to the continuing gap in academic achievement between native speakers and bilingual students (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009). Bilingual students continue to lag behind native speakers partly due to the lack of implementation of practices known to improve learning for this group of students (Garcia, Jensen, & Scribner, 2009). It is important to consider the factors that impact the attainment and proficiency in a second language. It also important to note that there are different types of bilingual learners and that there are a myriad of factors that can impact academic achievement for these students. Moreover, the many strategies that work to help this group of students are poorly implemented in schools. For this reason, I used the term by Garcia, Jensen, and Scribner (2009) that refer to the implementation gap as a “mismatch between what works and what is commonly done in classrooms across the United States” (p. 5).

Home Environment

Children’s home environment is another factor that can influence their achievement. In their study of children from Mexican backgrounds, Reese, Garnier, Gallimore, and Goldenberg (2000) found that there were two factors that influenced early Spanish reading and later English reading. Those two factors are the parents’ socioeconomic status and the literacy practices of the families in the study.

The language spoken at home is also an important factor for students learning a new language. Dixon and colleagues (2012) warn educators against telling parents to speak only English to their children and they discuss the benefits of maintaining the students' home language. In their review of studies related to language learning, they found a correlation between the use of home language by parents at home and the children's vocabulary and literacy skills in the second language (Dixon et al, 2012). Hammer, Davidson, Lawrence, and Miccio (2012) also examined the effect of maternal language on bilingual children's vocabulary development. This study found that "maternal usage of Spanish at home does not have a negative impact of children's developing English vocabulary and emergent literacy abilities when attending English immersion Head Start programs" (p. 117). This study suggests that parents should continue to develop their child's first language at home and that the use of that first language will not negatively impact the students' achievement and attainment of the new language. Cummins (2000) iceberg model helps us to understand the relationship between the primary language and the language that is being learned. Cummins (2000) iceberg model shows how the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in both languages overlap in an area that is called the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). Cummins states that "concepts are most readily developed in the first language and, once developed, are accessible through the second language. In other words, what we learn in one language transfers into the new language" (Freeman & Freeman, 1994, p. 176).

Quality of Instruction

The quality of instruction that students are provided is another factor that can impact language learning. Teachers must create welcoming environments that allow students to feel like they are able to take risks. English learners may experience anxiety due to the stress and nervousness of learning a new language. Ellis (2006) states that while anxiety is a complex phenomenon, “pedagogic intervention needs to be directed at achieving the right level and type of anxiety” (p. 541). Instructional methods that provide adequate support for students is also important in language learning. Gandara and Hopkins (2010) argue that teachers of bilingual students should have additional competencies. They recommend that teachers of bilingual student know how to implement lessons with standards specifically related to students who are learning English. Wong, Filmore, and Snow (2005) also suggest that teachers should have an extensive knowledge of first and second language learning theories in order to provide quality instruction and to meet the needs of students learning a second language.

The quality of instruction that can be provided to emergent bilingual students includes opportunities for collaborative social practices and lots of talk (Garcia et al., 2008). Additionally, students’ language and identities as bilingual students must be affirmed. A study conducted by De la Luz Reyes (2001) of four bilingual students from their time in kindergarten through second grade demonstrates that instruction that promotes and supports the use of the students’ native language creates a learning environment that develops the student’s biliteracy. In this study, the students received instruction in English and yet students developed competencies in both languages. De la Luz Reyes (2006) challenges teachers of bilingual students to “unleash students’ potential

by creating classrooms where English and Spanish are promoted, modeled, valued, nurtured, legitimize, and utilized” (p. 119).

Time

One of the key questions in learning a second language is the amount of time that it takes for emergent bilingual students to become proficient in the English language. As mentioned previously, many students are being exited prematurely from language learning programs due to the belief that social language is associated with academic language. Hakuta, Goto, Butler, and Witt (2000) conducted a study that examined the length of time that it takes students to gain proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. This study reports on data from four different school districts to draw conclusions on how long it takes students to develop oral and academic English proficiency. According to this study, it takes 3-5 years to develop oral language proficiency in English and it can take 4-7 years for most students (80%) to attain proficiency in academic language. The implications of studies such as this one are very important. Research tells us that the language proficiency takes long periods of time for most students, yet policy dictates that students must take standardized tests measuring achievement in a language that they have not mastered. Hakuta (2011) mentions that “policy has recognized the importance of academic language in a very rough form. NCLB requires states to develop proficiency assessments in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and to administer them annually and report on results” (p. 170). While the federal government does require states to report on these scores, states also must administer test measuring achievement in the target language to students who have not mastered English. Despite the attempts to measure proficiency by the federal

government, there is still a “political history in which advocates for ELLs have had to argue their way, often through litigious means, to get a seat at the table and have the needs of the students recognized” (Hakuta, 2011, p. 170).

The early exiting of students from programs that provide support in learning a new language poses a challenge for bilingual students. Many students do not receive the instructional support necessary to be successful in school (Zehler et al, 2003). A national survey conducted by Zehler and colleagues (2003) concluded that emergent bilingual students maintain their English Language Learner designation for an average of 3.55 years and receive language services for 3.51 years. When considering the amount of time that it takes students to attain academic language (5-7 years), students who are exited early from programs risk not receiving the educational support that they need for 1 ½ to 3 ½ years. Although many of these students have developed conversational English, they still lack “command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling (Cummins, 2000, p. 67). In the next section, I outline how writing workshop provides a space for emergent bilinguals to bridge their home language with the language spoken in school.

Writing Workshop

Early studies (Atwell, 1989; Calkins, 1983, 1986; Graves, 1983) related to writing instruction were the precursors of what is currently known as a writing workshop approach. Writing Workshop is a model for teaching writing through using a process approach (Graves, 1991). From this perspective, students are encouraged to use their own experiences as the main subject of their writing. Additionally, the writing workshop approach views writing as being a recursive process. This holistic approach to writing

does not solely focus on grammar or conventions, but instead focuses on having students share and communicate their ideas and thinking through writing. Ray (1999) describes it as learning to “do the sophisticated work of separating what it’s about from how it is written (p. 10). This model of writing values the ongoing process of writing and not just the finished product.

Structures of Writing Workshop

Writing workshop is defined by the structures that are commonly used when it is used in classrooms. Some of those structures include: a mini-lesson, student/teacher writing conferences, and a share time (Atwell, 1989; Calkins, 1986/1994). Calkins states that a writing workshop requires teachers “to anticipate how we will initiate, scaffold, and guide the classroom community toward an ever-deepening involvement...[by selecting] rituals, arrangements, and classroom structures” (1994, 183). Thus, the predictable and simple structures (Calkins, 1986/1994; Graves 1994; Short, Harste & Burke, 1996) used during the writing workshop are what help to establish the rituals for writing every day. The first essential structure of Writing Workshop is the mini-lesson. A mini-lesson is typically for 5-10 minutes to the entire group at the beginning of the workshop. Calkins (1986/1994) developed the idea of a mini-lesson as a time to provide instruction in some element of writing to the entire class. After the mini-lesson, the students write independently for a period of 30 minutes. During the independent writing time, the students are able to practice what they have learned about writing for extended periods of time. This is also a time when the teacher conferences individually with students. According to Calkins and Harwayne (1987), conferencing is the heart of the writing workshop because they provide teachers with the opportunity to hear what

students are thinking. The conferences also provided individualized writing instruction for students and help support them as writers. Students are also able to share their writing through sharing of the work by reading from the Author's chair. This is also a time when students can receive feedback about what they have written (Ray, 2001).

The Importance of Talk

Talk also plays an important role during the writing workshop time, and "it is built on the assumption that learners internalize talk" (Bomer & Laman, 2004, p. 423). .

Students use talk when communicating with the teacher during a mini-lesson. They also talk when they are composing at their seat. This is a part of students rehearsing what they are going to write about. However, talk can serve many different purposes in a writing workshop. In the classroom, talking, drawing, and writing are intertwined processes.

While we often think of writing as a stand-alone piece of work, Dyson (2003) argues that writing cannot be examined or evaluated without also studying and examining the talking and drawing. In her study of young children, Dyson learned that the discussions and stories behind the written words contributed to the message. She also learned that the words that the students were using were linked to the official school world as well as to unofficial worlds, "those words give voice to the child's intentions- but they are used words linked to other voices in the child's world" (p. 80)

Writing workshop happens in the official school culture, but it also takes place within a childhood culture (Dyson, 2003). The social cultural perspective on literacy is one perspective that is commonly studied and discussed by teachers. Working against constrictive environments and curriculums, teachers seek to find ways to create a space where different cultures and social worlds can come together to form communities of

readers and writers. In her study, Dyson (2003) gives readers an insight into the social worlds of children during their composing time. She describes a classroom in which students' worlds intersect. Dyson also documents how students constantly negotiate their spaces through the texts they are composed during the writing time.

Dyson (2003) characterizes the complex connections and fusion of the student's official classroom world with the many unofficial social worlds. She does so by describing the writing and development of children whose growth and writing demonstrate the complex negotiation of unofficial and official worlds in the writing of text in an elementary classroom. Through the descriptions of a lively classroom and the description of interactions between students, Dyson makes the case for having classroom communities that accept and value the diversity of learners. She specifically makes the case for what she refers to as a "permeable curriculum" in which teachers recognize the multifaceted social and cultural worlds of children and allow expressions of those cultures to be valid forms of writing.

Writing Workshop and Emergent Bilinguals

In contrast to studies that challenge using a process approach to writing, other studies (Blake, 2001; Dworin, 2006; Fu, 2009; Moll, Saéz, & Dworin, 2001; Manyak, 2001; Van Sluys, 2003) have documented the benefits of using a writing workshop approach with emergent bilingual students. In her book *From Ideas to Words*, Laman (2013) makes the argument for using writing workshop to teach multilingual students how to write. Some of the arguments that Laman (2013) makes for using writing workshop with multilingual students include the consistent structure of writing workshop, the use of writing for authentic purposes, and the opportunities to build on students'

strengths and languages. In their study of a kindergarten student and a third grade students, Moll, Saéz, and Dworin (2001) document how a kindergarten and third grade bilingual student were able to develop their biliteracy in classrooms where a writing workshop approach was used. The researchers describe how the classroom contexts and the options to write in a variety of ways afforded the students opportunities to develop competencies in both languages. Dworin's (2006) study with a fourth grade group of Latino students also demonstrates how students can draw on their skills of speaking and writing in two languages by writing dual language stories. Along with the classroom teacher, the researcher led the students in writing about topics that were relevant to the students. Students were able to interview family members and use the oral stories as the basis for their writing thus tapping the household knowledge and validating the students' home culture. Several students wrote about experiences that their families had when coming to the United States. The process of translating the oral stories from home and having the choice of writing it in Spanish also allowed the students to see both of their languages being valued in the classroom.

Critiques of Writing Workshop

While the advantages of using a writing workshop approach with bilingual students have been widely documented (Dworin, 2006; Fu, 2009, Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001; Manyak, 2001, Van Sluys, 2003), there are researchers (Delpit, 1988, Gutierrez, 1992; Reyes, 1991, 1992; Valdes, 1999) who have challenged the use of a process approach to writing with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Delpit (1988) suggests that by having culturally and linguistically diverse students focus on the process and not the product, teachers are hindering them from entry into the culture of power.

Delpit asserts that “teachers do students no service to suggest, even implicitly, that ‘product’ is not important (p. 287). Although Delpit (1988) believes that these approaches are valuable in valuing students’ identities, she also believes that teachers must explicitly teach the codes of the culture of power in order for students to be successful.

Another criticism of using a process approach to writing is that the structures (mini-lesson, conferencing, share time) of the writing workshop may deter some teachers from straying from those structures to meet the individual needs of students. Gutiérrez (1992) contends that the implementation of writing programs in schools is dependent on the teacher’s understanding of writing instruction, the classroom context, and the dialogue between teachers and students. For many teachers, the knowledge about the writing process is limited and therefore the writing instruction for students using a process approach may not be optimal.

Emergent Literacy

The field of early literacy has seen many changes in the last century. The very definition of what early literacy is has changed as the field has been introduced to theories and researchers who have helped to broaden the understanding of how young children learn to read and write. Teale and Sulzby (1986) define the term emergent literacy by stating that emergent denotes a student who is “in the process of becoming literate,” (p. xix) Early literacy has changed from being a field that is considered how children learn literacy only in the school setting to one that considers cultural and historical factors that impact literacy learning.

The interest in early literacy of young children emerged in the discipline of psychology. A psychological view contended that literacy development began when children entered formal schooling (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). The research conducted and the literature (Morphete & Washburn, 1931) at the time supported the belief in readiness theories, but a report by the Report on the National Committee on Reading in 1925 specifically addressed readiness as it related to reading (Teale & Sulzby, 1986).

The view shifted to focusing on readiness that was determined biologically to readiness that was environmentally determined. Researchers began to think about literacy through the lens of different disciplines. The work of Smith (1971) looked at different disciplines that had emerged that were related to the field of literacy (Gillen & Hall, 2003). Smith (1971) synthesis of the existing research compelled other researchers to begin to see reading as being something that was more complex than what had been thought. Through the synthesis of available research, he was also able to open the field of literacy to other fields that would later add significant contributions to the field of literacy (Gillen & Hall, 2003).

One of the researchers that led the way in the study of children's reading and writing was Marie Clay. Clay was a pioneer in the study of young children's reading, writing, and oral language development. In her landmark study about early reading, two questions led Clay's work:

Is there anything worth studying in the first year of reading instruction that can throw light on reading progress? Are there individual differences which could lead to reading failures observable in the first year of learning to read? (Clay, 1966, p.89-90)

Marie Clay's study involved the systematic observation of 100 children who were five to six years of age. She found that literacy instruction for low progress students had been delayed and she challenged the readiness theories that had been widely accepted. She found that young children could actually engage with reading and writing. The findings from her study did not justify "the practice of delaying reading instruction for children who seemed poorly prepared for literacy learning" (Ballantyne, 2009, p. 17). Clay is also credited with using the term 'emergent literacy' to refer "the behaviours of young children when they used books and writing materials in non-conventional ways" (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2004, p. 36). Some of the theoretical principles that became apparent in Marie Clay's work were that "reading and writing are complex problem-solving processes; children come to literacy with varying knowledge; and children take different paths to literacy learning" (Askew, 2009, p. 106). Clay's work emphasized that reading and writing were complementary processes. Prior to Clay's work, these two processes were seen as separate and many believed that children had to read in order to be able to write. (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2004; Askew, 2009).

The work of Goodman (1967) and Smith (1971) reconceptualized the meaning of literacy. This new meaning meant that "reading and writing were viewed as meaning-oriented activities" (Ballantyne, 2009, p. 22). This perspective also shifted from seeing literacy as an individual construct to a practice that is culturally and historically situated (Goodman and Goodman, 1990). Additionally, Yetta Goodman, using Ken Goodman's theory of reading, also theorized children's learning also began much earlier than when formal schooling began. This led her to begin studies that dealt with young children's awareness of environmental print (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Later, the work that spurred

from this perspective also tried to make sense of how individual students made sense of texts and what types of strategies students were using when reading (Hall, 2003). Ken Goodman's research related to miscues analysis focused on the belief that "readers predict as they read and use cues from their reading to confirm or disconfirm their predictions" (Goodman, 1989, p. 212).

In their analysis of studies related to emergent literacy, Yaden, Rowe and MacGillivray (2000) discuss how the field of emergent literacy has seen changes in perspectives with regards to the way that this term is defined. In conclusion, they identify three tenets of the current perspective of emergent literacy. Those tenets are:

(a) an optimistic view of children's ability to learn and forward trajectory from unconventional to conventional literacy; (b) a positive view of children as constructors of their own literacy knowledge; and (c) a belief that emergent literacy learning occurs "informally" in holistic, meaning-driven reading and writing events (p. 445).

In identifying these three tenets, the researchers acknowledge and value both unconventional and conventional literacy. This includes valuing students' experiences with literacy at home and wider social context. This view of emergent literacy also views literacy as a social practice.

Emergent Writing

Children learn about the meaning of writing even before receiving any formal instruction. Young children gain knowledge about how to write through observation of the world around them and through interactions with other people in the home and other

contexts (Teale, 1995; McGee & Purcell-Gates, 1997). In fact, several studies (Cox, Fang, & Otto, 1997; Dyson, 1997, 2003; Sulzby, 1996) have demonstrated how students' culture can impact the writing that children compose in the classroom. Thus, "emergent writing grows from the cultural practices of classrooms and homes" (Yaden, Rowe, MacGillivray, 2000, p. 436)

When compared to the field of emergent literacy as it relates to reading, the field of emergent writing has a much shorter history (Yaden, Rowe, MacGillivray, 2000). Early studies of writing (Clay, 1975; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Sulzby, 1986) focused on how young children made sense of writing. In their study of Spanish speaking students, Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) examined the writing trajectories of young students. In studying the writing attempts of young students, the researchers determined that students begin to hypothesize about the written language before they are formally taught to read and write. The commonalities in the way that children come to understand conventional writing include young students initial use combinations of scribbles, drawing, and writing to represent meaning, students then moving to invented spelling, and finally to more conventional forms of writing. Although initial attempts at writing include scribbling and drawing, children are learning about the meaning of writing (Graves, 1983). In the invented spelling stage, students are experimenting with spelling words. In using invented spelling, children use their knowledge of language to invent spellings for words that they don't know how to write. These misspelling of words can provide insight into children's hypothesis about written words (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Read, 1971). The term invented spelling was coined in Read's (1971) study. In his study of young children, he determined that children paid

particular attention to the sounds that they hear in oral language when writing. Thus, students use invented spelling when they are able to represent letters for sounds heard orally. Welsch, Sullivan, and Justice (2003) argue that this is an important milestone in children's writing development because it signals that students have developed the metacognitive capacities to represent letters with sounds.

In her studies about children's writing development, Dyson (1993, 1997, 2003) demonstrates how children learn about writing through social interaction with peers. Dyson (2003) sees writing development as very complex "process, not a series of stages nor a set of sequentially learned skills" (p. 11). In her study of six young African American children, Dyson (2003) describes how students' interactions during literacy events could be understood by examining the use of unofficial resources to participate in the official world of school. Students in this study used the context of their home and fused that context into the official school context. Thus writing development of children involves more than school, it also involves students social interaction with each other and with resources in children's' wider context.

Emergent writing also includes multiple sign symbols. Young writers begin to write by telling stories, drawing, and then formally writing stories. Talk in the classroom is key as students talk with others and to themselves about stories that they are writing or will write. Whitmore, Martens, Goodman, and Owocki (2005) make the argument that "children as young as three use talk to rehearse for composing, to narrate what they are writing, to provide the play-by-play action of their drawings, and to clarify intended meanings for others" (p. 301). Drawing also plays a key role due to young students'

limited accessibility to formal writing. Thus, drawing becomes another sign system for conveying meaning.

Emergent Bilinguals and Writing Research

The field of writing as it relates to emergent bilinguals is a field that continues to emerge. Although literacy development is different for individual students (Whitmore, Martens, Goodman, & Owocki, 2004), it is imperative to note studies that have focused on the writing development of emergent bilinguals. While there are been earlier studies on writing development (Edelsky, 1986), more recent studies have examined the writing development of young emergent bilinguals (Blake, 2001; Brown, Dworin, 2003/ 2006; Escamilla et al., 2009; Gort, 2006; McCarthey et al., 2004; Moll et al., 2001; Reyes, 2001; Reyes & Azuara, 2008; Soltero-Gonzalez & Reyes, 2012). However, most of these studies have focused on the writing development of emergent bilinguals in bilingual classrooms settings.

Edelsky (1986) conducted one of the earliest studies that examined the writing practices of bilingual students. Edelsky's longitudinal study included 27 bilingual students in first to third grade. Many of the children in study were children of migrant farm workers. Edelsky's study focused on students who were taught using a Whole Language approach to writing. Her study demonstrated that children were able to use a variety of techniques when writing unknown words and they did not solely rely on phonics skills that had been taught. Her study was instrumental in showing that literacy development in English (second language for students in this study) can occur without full command of oral language proficiency of the second language. Edelsky's finding also revealed that bilingual students were able to code-switch when speaking, but they

did not do this in their writing. This finding is important as it speaks to the students' awareness of how and when to use their two linguistic systems.

In their study in preschool English medium classrooms, Soltero-Gonzalez and Reyes (2012) also discuss the early writing development of Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual students. In these classrooms, the use of Spanish was only used to facilitate learning or developing English. Researchers explored how the students use their home language to participate in literacy practices in the classroom. They also discuss how students' home language was used as a meaning-making and representational tool. The students in the classes used Spanish to socialize with other students, but they also used it to "access prior knowledge" (p. 41). Students' home language served as a tool when constructing writing and it allowed the students a way to access experiences that they were familiar with. Soltero-Gonzalez & Reyes (2012) similarly found that these young students were able to code-switch when interacting with others in the classroom and this ability allowed students to co-construct meaning in using two languages. Students in this preschool classroom also used writing for different purposes. Children wrote cards and letters to each other despite the fact that they were not using conventional writing. They read the cards and letters to peers in Spanish and had conversations about what they had written to friends. The implications of this study are significant. In the English medium classrooms in the study, the use of the home language "facilitate[d] more sophisticated understandings of English literacy" (p. 47). The findings suggest that students' home language must be used as a resource in the classroom instead of being seen as a deficit. The current study is unique in that it took place in an English dominant primary classroom, but almost all students were emergent bilinguals. Research in this context is

necessary since most bilingual students currently living in the United States receive instruction in English only contexts with little or no support of their native language (Garcia et al, 2008).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the review of literature discussed studies that are related to emerging bilinguals and writing. The educational contexts in which many emergent bilinguals are educated were discussed. Additionally, the factors that influence achievement for this group of students indicate that this is an area that warrants further study. The discussion of emergent literacy, emergent writing, and emergent bilinguals and writing chronicles the history of this field and the current studies that have documented the writing trajectories of emergent bilinguals. Furthermore, the discussion of these studies reveals that most of the studies conducted in bilingual setting and that further research in English dominant setting is needed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study investigates the writing experiences of emerging bilingual students in a small public elementary school in a small city in the Southeastern U.S. Through the lens of care theory (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006; De Jesús & Antrop-González, & Nieto, 2008; Noddings, 2002, 1992, 1984), sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), and critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2009) this study focuses on the resources that emergent bilinguals in a kindergarten class draw upon when they are writing. The purpose of this study is to document what emerging bilingual students talk, draw, and write about when a teacher uses a writing curricula that provides students with opportunities to use what they already know. The following questions frame this research:

1. How do emergent bilingual writers participate in writing events?
2. What social, cultural, and linguistic resources do young emergent bilingual writers draw upon when engaged in the composing process?
3. What impact do these resources have on young emergent bilingual writers' understandings of the writing process?

I used case study design in light of the fact that I wanted to explore emergent bilinguals' writing practices in depth. According to Merriam (2009), the focus of qualitative research is the process, meaning, and understanding. This chapter describes the design of the study, introduces the context, and presents the timeline for the study.

Research Design

Case study research is a type of research method that is qualitative in nature.

Case study research is characterized by being the study of a bounded system (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009). Merriam (2009) establishes that the bounded system can be “a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 46).

Boundedness is important because it allows the researcher to study the system in depth. For this case study, I observed five students in a kindergarten classroom during writing workshop time.

When defining case study research, Merriam (2009) describes an additional three characteristics that are essential to this type of research. Those three characteristics are: *pluralistic, descriptive, and heuristic*. Particularistic refers to the how a case study has a focus that is specific or particular (p. 43). Descriptive refers to the rich and thick descriptions that are the nature of a case study (p. 43-44). The rich descriptions that are required of case study research allow the researcher to present the phenomenon completely and comprehensibly due to the prolonged time that is spent studying the phenomenon. These rich descriptions give the reader a clear understanding of the context and description of the phenomenon. Heuristic refers to how a case study allows the reader to create meaning by illuminating the reader’s understanding of that phenomenon (p. 44). The heuristic nature of a case study allows the reader to discover or rethink the essence of the phenomenon. Yin states that the purpose of case study research is to “expand and generalize theories” (2009, p. 15). Unlike other research methods that seek to generalize to different populations, case study research is focused on generalizing the theories.

A case study as a research method allows the researcher the opportunity to use multiple sources of data. Using multiple sources of data in a research study can serve several purposes. One reason for having multiple sources of information is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to collect different sources of data in order to offer rich and vivid descriptions of the phenomenon being studied. Because the knowledge that is gained from a case study is different from knowledge gained through other research methods, it is imperative to have the different sources of data (Stake, 1995). Another reason for having multiple sources of data is that it allows for the development of convergent lines of inquiry (Yin, 2009). Any case study conclusions that are reached are likely to be more convincing if they are based on or corroborated by multiple sources of data.

The steps that are to be followed when conducting case research vary by researcher; however there are some guidelines to follow that can serve as a guide (Yin, 2009). The first component that must be considered when conducting case study research is the type of questions that are being asked. Case study research is suitable for “how” and “why” questions, although some “what” questions could also be used (Yin, 2009). The rationale for this is that “how” and “why” questions are more likely to yield the rich and descriptive data that characterizes case study research. Another guideline is that some form of proposition(s) should guide the study. Through reading the literature, I learned how different groups of students use varied social, cultural, and linguistic resources when writing. This understanding guided me as I studied emergent bilinguals writing practices and the type of resources that they use. The next step when conducting case study research is to establish what the unit of study will be for the research (Yin, 2009). For this

study, I focused on 5 emerging bilingual students in a kindergarten classroom and capture their talk during writing workshop. These five focal students were selected through purposeful sampling using the following criteria: a.) students of both genders, b.) Students with varied academic levels, c.) students who typically talked and interacted with peers, and d.) students who were seated together during the writing workshop time and were comfortable with one another. Selecting 5 focal students allowed me to capture their talk and interactions as they wrote together during the writing workshop time. These individual cases were “understood as not only embedded within a classroom context, but also intertextually linked to the evolving case of the classroom community as a whole.” (Dyson, 1997, p. 23). Thus, these individual case studies were studied with the understanding that they were a part of the classroom community. Purposeful sampling enabled me to think about the purpose of the study and guided the identification of what Patton (2002) refers to as “information rich cases” (p. 230). In the sections that follow, I present information about the context of the study, participants, the time frame for data collection, data analysis approaches and techniques, considerations for trustworthiness, and finally researcher positionality.

Context of the study

Birchwood Elementary (all names are pseudonyms) is a small, public school in a small city in the Southeast region of the United States. Birchwood is a part of a school district that serves approximately 3,900 elementary school students. Of those students in the district, 69% are Latino, 20% are White, 5.5% are Black, 3 % are Multi-Racial, and 2.5% are Asian. Birchwood is an English dominant school that currently serves 430 students in Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade. Approximately 90% of the students at Birchwood are

identified as economically disadvantaged. Due to the high percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch, a grant from the state allows 100% of the students at Birchwood receive free lunch and breakfast. In terms of student demographics of the student population, about 90% of the students are Latino, 3% African American, 5% White, and 3 % multi-racial or other. The school is designated as a Title I school due to its high number of students who are economically disadvantaged. About 45% of the students are emergent bilinguals and the majority speaks Spanish and English. The percentage of students who are considered English learners is much higher in kindergarten through second grade than in grades three through five due to the percentage of students who exit from receiving ESOL services.

The school was built in the 1960's and has undergone many renovations, as well as additions to the original building. The school is located in the east side of the city and serves students living in the neighborhoods around the school. In fact, over 90% of the students live within a 1 mile radius and are able to walk to school. The community that surrounds the school has a mixture of houses, apartment complexes, and government housing. Many of the residents that live in this area are Latino families, most of who have emigrated from Mexico. Several local Latino businesses and churches are also a part of the neighborhood.

Data Collection

This study examined emergent bilingual students' writing development during the writing workshop. The study took place in the Spring of 2013. The data collection began in April 2013 and continued until the end of the school year in late May 2013. I spent 4-5 days a week in a kindergarten classroom during the writing workshop time. The writing workshop time usually lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and included a mini-lesson taught

by the teacher, independent writing time, and a share time at the end of the writing time. In total, I had collected a total of 17 writing workshop sessions, ranging in times of 25 to 70 minutes. I was familiar with this kindergarten class because I was able to work in that class providing instruction as an Early Intervention Program (EIP) teacher. During my data collection phase, my role was that of a participant observer (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002), where I usually observed and took field notes. My interactions with the students were minimal, although I did respond when students talked to me or asked questions.

Throughout the data analysis phase, I used researcher memos as an opportunity to write down thoughts about codes or ideas about the process. Charmaz (2006) equates writing memos to having a conversation with yourself and sees it as a way to “catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue” (p. 72). I kept researcher memos during the data collection stage as well as when I was initially coding the data. Table 1 provides an overview of the relationship between the research questions and data sources. I will now describe the interviews and discuss the classroom based data that was collected.

Table 1

Research Questions and Corresponding Data Sources

Research Questions	Sources of Data
How do emergent bilingual writers participate in writing events?	Field notes Audio/video recording of students during writing workshop Student writing samples
What social, cultural, and linguistic resources do young emergent bilingual writers draw upon when engaged in the composing process?	Teacher interview transcript Field notes Student writing samples Audio/video recording of students during writing workshop

	Parent interviews
What impact do these resources have on young emergent bilingual writers' understandings of the writing process?	Student interviews
	Parent Interviews
	Audio/video recording of students during writing workshop
	Field notes
	Student writings samples

Interviews

I conducted three kinds of interviews for this study. An initial interview with the teacher was conducted and it sought to capture the practices around the teaching of writing, as well as beliefs about working with bilingual students. One follow- up debriefing session with the teacher also focused on looking at students' writing. Additionally, I conducted one student interview with the five focal students in order to learn about students' perceptions of themselves as writers. I also conducted interviews the focal students' parents. Next, I provide a more detailed discussion of the use of each type of interviews.

Teacher Interviews. In May, I also conducted an initial interview with Ms. Brown, the classroom teacher. The initial interview focused on the teacher's beliefs around writing and the teaching of emergent bilingual students. The interview was semi-structured and followed a similar structure that the student interviews did by focusing on students' language, family, and culture, writing, and classroom practices (see Appendix A). An additional interview was conducted with the teacher that focused on students' writing. A protocol (see Appendix B) was used to make observations about the student' writing pieces.

Student Interviews. I conducted an initial interview with the five focal students. The focal students were selected with the help of the teacher. The students were all emergent bilinguals and spoke Spanish as their first language. The five focal students sat together during the independent writing time. These interviews were conducted with the entire group of focal students. The interviews were conducted in two sessions of 20 minutes each outside of the classroom. The first session of the interview was conducted in April and the second session was conducted in early May. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on questions related to students' language, family, and culture, their views of writing, and their classroom experiences with writing (see Appendix C). The interviews were conducted in both Spanish and English depending on the responses of the students. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Parent Interviews. I also invited the parents of the focal students to participate in an interview (Appendix D). The parents were given options about the time and place for the interview in order to provide a location that was comfortable to them. All of the parents chose to meet me for the interview at the school. Although the invitation was made for both parents to attend, only the mothers came for the interview. The interviews ranged in time from 15 to 25 minutes. All of the interviews, except one, were conducted in Spanish. All of the interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and translated.

Classroom Based Data

The data collection included field notes of the whole group mini-lesson, audio/video recording of the focal students while they were composing, audio/video recording of the teacher and focal students' writing conferences, and researcher field notes of the independent writing and share time. Focal students sat together during the

writing time for the duration of the study. Additionally, copies of student writing were collected. The audio/video recording of the students composing occurred 3-5 times during the week as they are sitting and writing together. During this time, students wrote independently. Students had assigned seating, but were allowed to move around the room to gather materials, collect writing tools, or to use resources in the room. In this class, the writing workshop time ranged from 25-70 minutes. Figure 1 shows my physical location (the researcher) as it relates to the focal students in the classroom. The figure also shows where the camera was located during the data collection phase. During this time, the classroom teacher conferenced with individual students and therefore she did not have a permanent location during the writing workshop time.

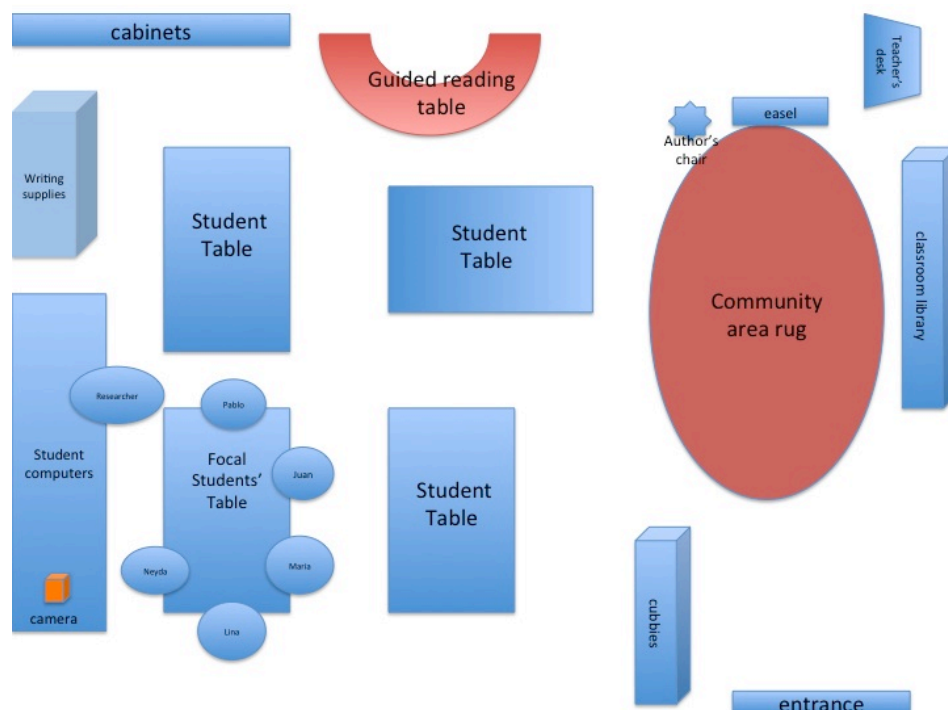


Figure 1. Classroom layout

The format of the field notes collected during the writing workshop followed the suggestion of Bodgan and Biklen (2007) to document both descriptive notes and reflective notes. Descriptive notes focused on the setting, actions, and conversations as they were happening and reflective notes captured my personal account of what was seen and heard, as well as ideas and concerns. During the initial stage of the data collection, I recorded researcher memos to reflect on what was being learned (Bogdan & Bliken, 2007) as I observed students during the writing workshop time. Dyson and Genishi (2005) also suggest that researchers begin to write about what is being learned throughout the process and to begin this writing at the beginning of the data collection stage. These field notes helped to capture the nonverbal actions that took place during the writing workshop time.

Analytic Procedures

Data Management Plan

For this study, I used the qualitative software Dedoose to aid in the data organization and analysis of the transcripts. This qualitative software allowed me to import and organize the data by the date in which it was collected. This software also allowed me to create excerpts and apply multiple codes to the excerpts. I was also able to easily create new codes and also to link researcher memos to codes or excerpts.

Qualitative Analysis Methods

For this study, I conducted a qualitative study that focused on the resources that emergent bilingual students use in a writing workshop. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative data analysis “is the process of making sense out of the data” (p. 193). Data

analysis in case study research tends to be inductive and reflexive in nature (Dyson & Genishi, 2005).

The first phase of the data analysis was to transcribe the data. I analyzed data for this study through the use of a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is a “systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2) Grounded theory emerged from the work of Glaser & Strauss (1967) and has been further developed by other researchers. Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified the components of grounded theory as: “1) Simultaneous data collection and analysis, 2) constructing analytic codes and categories from data, 3) using the constant comparative method during each stage of the analysis, 4) advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis, 5) memo writing, and 6) sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness”(p. 5-6).

Initial coding

The first step when using a grounded theory method of analysis is to begin coding the data. Charmaz (2005) states “coding is the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations” (p. 43). I began to analyze the data through the use of *initial coding* (Charmaz, 2006). In coding the data, the goal was to learn about the participants, “initial coding helps the grounded theory researcher to discover participants’ views rather than to assume that researcher and participants share views and words” (Charmaz, 2003, 676). The codes were generated inductively based on the data. During this initial coding of the transcripts, I read the transcripts closely, created excerpts, and applied codes by what was seen in the data. After I finished the initial

coding stage, I created a total of 1, 116 excerpts from the writing workshop transcripts. New codes were created as they became evident in the data. In each stage of the analysis, the new concepts, data, or ideas were constantly compared with the previous data. Charmaz (2006) makes several recommendations and provides instructions for coding when using a grounded theory approach:

[R]emain open; stay close to the data; keep your codes simple and precise, construct short codes, preserve actions, compare data with data, and move quickly through the data (p. 49).

During the initial coding, I created a total of 72 codes. Table 2 represents a detailed example of how I coded the data and also illustrates how an excerpt of the data could include multiple codes. These codes were kept short and reflected what I was noticed in the transcripts. After coding, I went back and read the transcripts again to account for codes added later in the reading of the transcripts.

Table 2

Excerpts	Codes Assigned
Lina: I'm going to write about when we went to the mall with you with my brother. No when I went to eat and your dad got a haircut.	Student Experiences Student Experiences: with family Writing topics
Juan: I'm going to write about Power Rangers	Popular Culture Writing Topics
Lina: Hey, what about this. Write about we went to the circus with your brothers.	Writing Topics Students telling each other what to do
Juan: No Lina, I'm going to do my Power Rangers story	Writing Topics Popular Culture
Arely: Juan, do you have gray? I need it.	Student questions to each other Ownership of writing tools

Neyda: No, we don't have gray. No we don't have. Let me check and see	Ownership of writing tools
Neyda: Este es mio. [This is mine]	Use of Spanish Ownership of writing tools

Developing Categories

After the initial coding, I began to analyze the codes in order to begin to define relationships among the codes. In order to make sense of the codes, I wrote the codes on notecards and began to group them. I sorted the codes and grouped them into defined groups. Some of the ideas for these groups or categories were developed through memo writing that helped me to link what I was seeing during the initial coding. After developing some emerging categories, I worked with a colleague who helped me to look over the categories and codes that I had grouped within each category (See Appendix E). The categories that were created included *linguistic resources*, *topics of interests*, *adopting a collaborative stance*, *social affiliation*, *student self-talk*, and *teacher talk*.

Considerations for Trustworthiness

In this study, I made efforts to ensure that the level of rigor was adequate so that the study would be considered to be a trustworthy study. Yin (2009) suggests that the researcher documents the steps and procedures as much as possible to ensure a transparency in the process. This documentation of the process allowed me to convey the steps that were taken during each phase of the study. For this study, triangulation was used through using different sources of information to corroborate findings. The use of audio/video recording, interviews, and field notes allowed me to substantiate findings by using information from different sources.

Role of the Researcher

I articulate my position because I believe that a researcher's experiences shapes the foundation for the type of researcher that is to be conducted. I position myself as Latina woman who is an immigrant and is currently biliterate, bicultural, and bilingual. All of these experiences have shaped my research interests. Dyson and Genishi (2005) state that "every person has a biography that precedes her existence as a researcher, incorporating characteristics like race, class, gender, and ability"(p. 57). In this study, I consider myself an insider (Johnson-Bailey, 2004) in multiple ways. I am an insider due to my own personal experiences of learning English and being an emerging bilingual student. Like most of the students in the classroom where the study will take place, I am also a Latina and my family immigrated to the United States when I was a little girl. At this time, my family experienced economic hardships. Most of the students in this classroom also come from homes with very low socioeconomic backgrounds. The poverty levels at the research site have denoted the school as a title I school. Additionally, the school qualifies for free lunch for 100% of students due to the high number of students who live in poverty. I am also an insider because of my work at the school where the research will take place. My role as a literacy coordinator allows me to work with teachers through providing professional development and coaching in their classroom during the literacy time. I have worked in this class as an Early Intervention teacher during the reading workshop time and provide small group reading instruction for 45 minutes a day. This has allowed me to become familiar with the students and the teacher and has allowed me to understand their routines and procedures.

In this qualitative study, my role was that of a participant observer. Since I had insider knowledge about the ways that this classroom works, I spent time getting to know the students and teachers. My knowledge of English and Spanish allowed me to listen to students' exchanges during the writing workshop time in both languages.

Conclusion

In sum, this qualitative case study aimed to examine how emergent bilingual students participated in the writing workshop. This study examined the social, cultural, and linguistic resources that the students used when they were composing and how the use of these resources impacted students' understandings of the writing process. Using a constant comparative method of analysis allowed for themes and patterns to emerge from the multiple sources of evidence. These themes and patterns were examined through a socio-cultural lens that considered the different aspects of writing and talking of kindergarten emergent bilingual children during the writing workshop time.

CHAPTER 4

SETTING AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter focuses on providing the context for the study. To describe the context, I draw from data collected about the participants, the families, and the teacher. A description of the school's surrounding community, the demographics and a glimpse inside the school offer a picture of the setting. I provide a description of the teacher in this study, her beliefs about language, her classroom activities and the daily routines that the focal students in classroom experienced every day. Additionally, I each of the focal students in the study is described to include home language, families, and academic progress.

Birchwood's Surrounding Community

Birchwood Elementary is located in the east side in a small town in a southeastern state. This town is home to about 33,000 people. According to 2011 American Community Survey conducted by the US Census, 48% of the people living in this town identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) This small town has changed dramatically as the population has shifted in the last two decades. The community has seen the population shift from mostly White and African American to having a large number of Latino residents. The Latino population in this community began to grow in the late 1990's and has continued to grow due to the growth of the textile industry. This has been the trend in the last three decades mostly due to job

opportunities in manufacturing and this trend in the growth of Latino residents is also reflected in the local school system.

The main industries in this city are textile related and these industries make up a significant number of jobs here. The recession hit particularly hard in this town dependent on manufacturing. The percentage of people unemployed has remained much higher than the state average due to the weakening demand of the textile industry. The high unemployment numbers, declining property values, and the high number of foreclosures have attracted national attention. In 2012, the US Labor Department identified this town as the town with the worst job loss in the United States, losing close to 4,600 jobs in just one year (US Labor Department, 2012). The percentage of people who are unemployment in this town has remained higher than the state average with over 12.3% of people unemployed in July 2013 (US Labor Department, 2013).

Not unlike many small towns in the United States, an active railroad line divides the town. Birchwood is located in the side of town with the higher population of Latino families. Two other elementary schools are also within 5 miles of Birchwood and many of the families that are a part of Birchwood and those other schools walk to places if possible due to lack of access to cars or lack of access to obtaining a license in the state of Georgia. As you ride down the streets where the school is located, many Mexican stores and businesses line the streets. Signs in Spanish advertise weekly specials in stores and butcher shops. A bakery is open early every day so that people can pick up Mexican pastries before heading to work. A combined business of a tortilla factory and a popsicle shop is one of the most visited businesses in the area. Population is not the only distinguishing factor between the two sides of the town. The community surrounding the

school is one the poorest in the city with 38% of the residents living in poverty (city-data.com). This difference in economic realities of the two sides of town can also be seen in the percentage of kids that are considered to be economically disadvantaged. The elementary schools located in the east side of town serve double the number of students who are considered to be economically disadvantaged as denoted by the free and reduced lunch percentage (Georgia Department of Education, 2011)

Birchwood is located in a community comprised of small single-family homes, apartments, and government housing complexes. Many of these homes and buildings were built around the 1960's. The school is located in between two large government housing complexes that include one to three bedroom apartment homes. Several churches are within walking distance of the school, including three predominantly African American churches and one newly restored Baptist church with all Latino church members. Many of families in the community also use the school playground after school to walk around the track or for their children to use the playground apparatus. After school or on the weekends, children are seen playing outside or walking to the playground. A new community center opened in the spring of 2012 and it created a sense of excitement for something new and different. It is located about a mile from the school and also serves as a central point for this community. Students attending Birchwood are able to walk to the community center. The center houses a medical clinic for children that receive WIC (Women, Infants, and Children). The directors hope to open an adult clinic since there are very few medical facilities in this side of town. The community center also includes an indoor walking track, an outdoor splash pad, and 2 new

gymnasiums. Additionally, several soccer fields are available for children's recreational teams.

A Glimpse Inside the School

In 2009, Birchwood celebrated 40 years in this community and is one of the oldest elementary school buildings in the district. Birchwood originally opened as a K-2 school and the architecture of the building with one long hallway in the upstairs and one long hallway in the downstairs makes evident the age of the school. Pale yellow walls hide behind the multitude of student work displayed in the halls. Student writing and class made murals are evidence of the learning that is happening in the classrooms. Framed student art is on display throughout the school and every year takes up every available hallway space that is not assigned to classrooms. This art not only represents the best artists in the school, but it also represents a rich tradition in the school as 3 new art pieces are selected every year dating back 20 years.

Birchwood has made attempts to engage parents in meaningful ways, but language presents a barrier, as many of the parents do not speak English. As parents and students walk into the school, a bilingual receptionist greets them. Information for parents is displayed and available to parents about various school and community services in both English and Spanish. The school opens its doors at 7:30 a.m. and many parents line up to enter the school with their children. Families bring younger siblings who join students as they eat breakfast. The cafeteria becomes a place for parents to talk to each other and discuss what is happening in the school or with their children. As students and parents leave the cafeteria, parents walk students to class, often stopping to see what

work is displayed in the hallway. Often, parents are seen seeking a translator or using their own children in order to communicate with their teachers in the morning if they have questions or concerns.

Birchwood is a title I school serving a large number of students living in poverty. Due to the large number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, the school has been provided with a waiver in which all students receive free lunch and breakfast every day. Additionally, through a federal grant, students receive a fresh fruit or vegetable snack every day to encourage healthy eating habits. Very few students bring their lunch to school. Students sit in large tables during lunch with their class as they eat. Parents are also welcome to eat breakfast and lunch with their children. Students whose parents come to eat lunch with them are allowed to pick a friend to sit with them during lunch.

Students in Pre-kindergarten through fifth grade attend Birchwood. Most of the students at this school speak Spanish as their first language. Throughout the day, students can be seen having conversations in a mix of English and Spanish known to students as Spanglish (Ardila, 2005). A large number of the students are second-generation immigrants whose parents came to the United States in search of work (Portes and Zhou, 1993). Just like the community has shifted in demographics, the demographics of students attending Birchwood have also changed in the last decade (see Table 3).

Table 3

Birchwood Shift in Demographics

Fall of Year	African-American	Anglo	Latino	Other (multi-racial)
1990	24%	61%	14%	1%
1992	24%	53%	21%	2%
1994	19%	37%	42%	2%
1996	18%	25%	54%	3%
1998	15%	13%	70%	2%
2000	9%	7%	81%	3%
2002	7%	4%	85%	4%
2004	7%	4%	86%	3%
2006	5%	6%	83%	6%
2008	3%	6%	86%	5%
2010	4%	3%	89%	4%

Note. From National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Literacy Framework

The school district adopted the literacy framework known as Literacy Collaborative in 2005. The Literacy Collaborative literacy framework is a comprehensive language and literacy model that is based on the work of Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. This framework emphasizes job embedded professional development and coaching provided by in-school literacy coaches. The framework is comprised of 3 major components: reading workshop, writing workshop, and language and word study (Fountas & Pinnell, 2000; 2006). A distinction is made between primary grades from K-2 and intermediate grades 3-5 and professional development is developed specifically for

the different groups. Schools are encouraged to provide a 2.5 to 3 hours uninterrupted language and literacy block every day for all teachers in K-5.

I will use Ms. Brown, the teacher in this study, as an example to describe the type of professional learning and support that a new teacher receives. During the school year, Ms. Brown participated in what is known as the “Year One” course for new teachers. Although she had received the course for the intermediate grades, any teacher new to the primary grades is required to participate in the course. For this intensive training, Ms. Brown was required to attend 3 summer days of professional development. The district literacy coordinator and all the primary literacy coaches teach this course that focuses on the different components of the literacy framework. The professional development provided for new teachers continues to be an ongoing process. As the school year began, my role as a literacy coordinator was to support Ms. Brown through coaching. New teachers participate in two coaching sessions per month. Ms. Brown also participated in the professional development focused around literacy at the school level and she also continued the 40 hour Year One Course at the district level. I will now describe the three components of the literacy and language framework that are implemented in classrooms every day in Ms. Brown’s classroom.

Reading Workshop

The first component of the Literacy Collaborative framework is reading workshop. In the primary grades, reading workshop includes independent literacy workstation and guided reading. In the intermediate grades, reading workshop consists of a read-aloud, independent reading, guided reading, and literature study (Fountas and

Pinnell, 2000; 2006). During the reading workshop time, students have many opportunities to read with different levels of support from the teacher.

The independent literacy workstation time is a time when students can practice reading and writing in meaningful ways. Students in Ms. Brown's class were introduced to the routines of workstations during the first week of school. Students are grouped heterogeneously and these groups change throughout the year. Examples of workstations include classroom library, listening station, computer station, writing station, and ABC workstations. Each of these workstations provides students with opportunities to work at their own pace and to learn how to manage their own learning. To help students with this task, Ms. Brown wrote "I can" posters for the workstations so that students would know the expectations for workstation was.

While students are engaged in literacy workstations, the teacher is teaching guided reading. Guided reading is a time when "the teacher works with a small group of children who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support" (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996, p. 2). In Ms. Brown's kindergarten class, students received small group reading support 3 or 4 times a week. Due to the large number of students who needed additional support in reading, I was able to go in her class during this time and also teach a guided reading group. Guided reading groups were grouped initially based on reading behaviors and processes, but these groups changed dramatically throughout the year. For example, Neyda began in one of the low progress groups and ended the year in the highest progress group. Books that are used for guided reading in this school use the Fountas and Pinnell (2006) text gradient. Teachers use running records

on a daily basis to inform instruction and to make decisions about next steps for students and about possible text selection.

Writing Workshop

The second component of the Literacy Collaborative framework is writing workshop. At the beginning of the writing workshop, teachers teach a whole-group mini-lesson to all students in the class. After the mini-lesson, students write independently while the teacher conferences one-on-one with students. At the end of the workshop, the teachers select a few students to share their writing. Students may share a part of their story or their entire writing piece. This is also an opportunity for students to ask questions and give feedback. This part of the framework has the same structure for primary and intermediate grades.

Writing Workshop in Ms. Brown's class begins with all the students gathered at the large rug. Ms. Brown also refers to this area as the community area. Students gather as the teacher provides a short lesson that will help the students with their writing. Mini-lesson varied in topic, but during the time of the study Ms. Brown mostly focused on lessons around the craft of writing. For example, a mini-lesson focused on adding dialogue to a story in different ways. Students read books that included dialogue between two characters through the use of quotation marks and another book that used talking bubbles. During this time, Ms. Brown always referred to students as writers. The following example illustrates the interactions between Ms. Brown and the Lina during the mini-lesson.

Ms. Brown: Writers, we have been working really hard on adding details to your story and your words

Lina: I even use talking bubbles

Ms. Brown: Yes, that is one way that you can show when someone is talking, but today we are talking about details that you can add to your story. (Field Notes, May 1, 2013)

After the mini-lesson, students were dismissed to their seat. Students were responsible for finding their own writing folder and getting started. One student per table was responsible for gathering the writing tools that the students used as they wrote. At the focal students' table, Lina was responsible for gathering and arranging those materials. She took this role very seriously and often discussed how she divided the writing tools among students. One day, as she was getting the writing tools ready for her table, she noticed that she did not have what she needed and she yelled out, "seriously.... Ms. Brown, where's our green crayons. We can't find our tools again" (Writing Workshop, May 13, 2013). The negotiating of writing tools used during the independent writing time became something that students did on almost a daily basis.

During the independent writing time, students sat together at their tables and wrote about self-selected topics. Writing topics ranged from stories about the students' lives to stories about television characters. Students were able to talk to each other while they were writing. They were also free to get up and use resources, such as charts or books, to help them with writing. The teachers in the room held individual writing conferences with students. These conferences were held at the students' writing tables.

After about 30 minutes of independent writing time, students put their materials and folders away and gathered at the large rug to share their writing or to listen as others shared. Ms. Brown had a chair at the front that she referred to as the author's chair. Students were selected by Ms. Brown to share if they had taken on the mini-lesson that she had taught or if there was something specific that she wanted to point out about their writing. After students read aloud their writing, other students had an opportunity to ask a question or to share something that they had noticed about the writing. Sharing was an important part of the writing workshop in Ms. Brown's class. This was a time to celebrate the writing in the classroom and to affirm students who tried out the mini lesson presented by Ms. Brown.

The importance of talk during the writing workshop time began early in the year with storytelling. Students in the classroom began the year with the premise that they all had a story to tell. Students all had an opportunity to share their stories orally with each other during a time of storytelling before formal writing began. Students sat together in the community area and listened to each other as they told stories about everyday life. Ms. Brown's goal for this time was to help students realize that they have stories from their lives that are worthy of writing about. As students listened to each other's stories, they had an opportunity to listen and to ask questions. This storytelling time set the tone for the rest of the year that talk and interactions with each other were important in the writing workshop. Students began to see how the stories that they told could be written about. Focal students' ways of using language during the writing workshop for certain purposes and functions were very sophisticated. Students were able to use both their

native and their second language as they navigated the social relationships within the group.

Language and Word Study

The third component is the language and word study block. At the primary level, this block of time last for approximately an hour and includes interactive read-aloud, interactive writing, shared reading, word study, and storytelling. At the intermediate level, this time includes interactive read aloud and may also include interactive edit, interactive vocabulary instruction, readers' theater, and shared reading (Fountas and Pinnell, 2000; 2006)

In Ms. Brown's room the literacy framework begins with read-aloud, students sit in a circle around a large rug and discuss books that are read. Students are taught to have conversations around books and turn-and-talk strategy in which students talk to a partner is often used. During this time all students have an opportunity to participate. Ms. Brown strategically plans what students are partners and accounts for students who are learning how to speak English. For example, early on, Neyda was paired with student who was able to translate for her and someone who she could speak Spanish to. Although it is important that Neyda was able to speak to someone, there were some times when she did not know what the discussion was supposed to be about because all of the books that were used in the classroom were in English. The read-aloud time in Ms. Brown's class was often used as a time to also get students to notice what the author of the story was doing. For example, as she was reading the book *There is a Bird on Your Head* (Willems, 2007), Ms. Brown asks the students about what the writer did when the characters are having a conversation.

Ms. Brown: The whole story was about a conversation, in your writing if you are having a conversation, could you put capital letters like that? (Field Notes, April 30, 2013)

Ms. Brown not only used this time as a time to read books, but she also invited her students to read the books like writers (Ray, 1999). Students used the read-aloud books that Ms. Brown chooses to read as mentor texts when they are writing. Students often got up to look at the books that they had read together when they were starting their writing.

Ms. Brown

Ms. Brown is a White young woman in her late twenties. She is vibrant and loves to teach young children. This is Ms. Brown's fourth year teaching and all of her teaching career has been at Birchwood. She began her teaching career as a pre-K teacher and then spent two years as a 4th grade teacher and this past year has moved down to kindergarten. From watching her teaching, she seems like she has been teaching kindergarten for many years. She is very comfortable working with young children and she captures their attention as she teaches. She is also a leader in her grade level and often brings ideas to the table that move teachers to think about shifting practices. For example, she began to study about the importance of drawing during the writing workshop and ways to continue to incorporate drawing throughout the kindergarten year. She approached her colleagues and they began to incorporate some of the ideas about drawing that she had brought forth to the group in their classroom. She describes feeling like this school is where she needs to be and work. She speaks in a positive way about the school, parents, and students at all times. She loves working with the families and feels like the families have a high level of

respect for teachers and that they have a heart for understanding and supporting their children.

I love that part about this. I don't see it [working with this population] as a deficit. I see it as truly powerful because you can take what they have and the progress that they make and how to make the connections for them. It's not a loss or a deficit for our children. It's just different. I don't see it as they can't do this because of this. All things are possible so I don't see anything not happening for them. (Interview, June 4, 2013)

Ms. Brown was born in the town where the school is located, but she attended the county school system when she was a student. She didn't always know that she was going to be teacher. In college, Ms. Brown wanted to major in business marketing. Her mother and grandmother were both teachers and she thought that she did not want to that because that was what was expected. She realized that she wanted to work with children and describes how she reached that conclusion.

I realized this [business marketing] is not what I wanted to do because my heart is with children and building a foundation and instilling things in children that are important. The whole body, soul, and spirit of an individual. The value of themselves and the value of learning and how that can take them anywhere that they want to go. Working with children is just so rewarding because of children's' individual beings. It is different every day and I like different things and I just enjoy that part about being in teaching. (Interview, June 4, 2013)

Ms. Brown's Beliefs about Language

Ms. Brown understands the power of language. She is careful with words that she uses with her students and reflects on the words that she uses with them. Ms. Brown refers to students as readers and writers from the first day of school. She wants students to identify themselves with this identity and her beliefs embody Johnston's (2004) assertions that "building an identity means coming to see in ourselves the characteristics of particular categories (and roles) of people and developing a sense of what it feels like to be that sort of person and belong in certain social spaces" (p. 23). Ms. Brown describes how she fosters in students the belief that they are writers.

The language that I use calling them writers, having themselves call each other writers. It's a lot about the language that I use and the verbal language that I use when I demonstrate writing. Making sure that I use the language and call them writers and say "writers do this." I use to say "good writers do this" and that of course that lets them know that there are bad writers out there and so I don't do that anymore. When we have share time, having the students respond as readers of the piece, but also as writers themselves. Teaching them to use that phrasing, "As a writer, I am noticing that..." and through that it's getting them used to what writers do and may say. (Interview, May 15, 2013)

Students in Ms. Brown's class know that she views them as writers. When focal students were asked if Ms. Brown thought they were writers, they all unanimously agreed that Ms. Brown saw all of them as writers. . For example, in a conversation that I had with Ms. Brown, I told her that I noticed that she referred to students as "good writers." I told her that this term denotes that there were bad writers in the class and that this may

send the wrong message to young students learning to write. After our conversation about this, I noticed that she no longer used the term “good writers.” Instead, Ms. Brown talked about what writers did or how writers used certain tools.

The students in Ms. Brown’s class constantly switch between the use of Spanish and English when they are working. This creates a complicated scenario because neither the teacher nor the paraprofessional speaks Spanish. In describing her beliefs about students use of Spanish in the classroom, Ms. Brown shares that she is okay with students speaking Spanish or English.

I think that is important. That is who they are and so if you don’t let them be who they are then they are going to be in a box and when you put them in a box it’s hard for them to be able to express themselves and to write and so I think it’s important to let them talk. If they are talking, then they are going to have a story to tell. If they not talking, then it’s going to be hard for them to put it on paper. So whether it is in Spanish or English that is of no preference to me because they are being vocal and verbal and it will come out because you are not blocking the student from being who they are and what they have in them to get out on paper whether it’s a story or any sort of learning. (Interview, May 15, 2013)

Ms. Brown’s Classroom

The first thing that you see when you walk into Ms. Brown’s classroom is a large rug taking up almost half of the classroom with an easel at the front. In Ms. Brown’s classroom this area is known as the community area. Student meet here first thing in the morning to talk about what is going to happen that day. During the literacy time, students

gather here to listen to the teacher read books, for the reading and writing mini-lessons, and share time. This is an area that also houses the classroom library. The classroom library has large tubs of books organized by topics such as animals, ABC books, or cartoon books. All of the books in the classroom are in English. Next to the easel, sits a white chair that Ms. Brown refers to as an author's chair. Students sit in this chair when they share their writing or their work. Students also spend a large part of the day sitting in this community area.

Overall, the sense is that this classroom belongs to children. Students' names are displayed above this area on a name chart that is constantly referred to during instruction. Their work is displayed in every corner of the room. Ms. Brown has a small desk that hides behind the easel that she rarely ever uses. The classroom is organized and has clearly defined areas. The back of the room houses the writing station and there are multiple choices of paper. Student examples hang from the wall as examples of quality work that the students have produced. There is a word study station that houses many letter and word activities. Students sit in tables and materials are easily accessible to them. Students in Ms. Brown's class have an assigned seat in kid size tables. They sit at their seat during for morning work and for the writing workshop time. The rest of the day, students move around the classroom as they work in learning centers for math or literacy workstations.

The classroom walls are covered with charts. All the charts are produced with the students and there are no commercially made charts visible in this classroom. One side of the wall houses the charts that help students with math. The other sides house writing charts created during interactive writing. The charts include words and colorful pictures

that match the topic. They include titles such as: “Places we Go”, “Family Words”, and “Favorite Characters”. Ms. Brown creates these charts with the students at the beginning of the year with the intent that students will use them as they write about their experiences throughout the school year.

Instructional Day

Ms. Brown’s day begins with morning work. Students typically complete a worksheet about counting, handwriting, or some sort of phonics skill. During this time, Ms. Brown and the paraprofessional in the room collect ice cream money, take attendance, or attend to any issues that may arise. This is also a time when parents walk in to ask questions as they drop the student off. The morning block of time from 8:30-11:30 comprises the literacy framework. Ms. Brown begins her day with a read-aloud at the community area. After the read-aloud, Ms. Brown proceeds with the day’s writing mini-lesson. Students sit on the rug as the teacher demonstrates what she wants students to take on that day in writing. The writing workshop is followed by the reading workshop. During this time, students participate in literacy workstations while Ms. Brown and myself pull small reading groups. During this time, students are self-directed and they choose how long they want to remain at each literacy workstation. After reading workshop, students come back to the community area and participate in shared reading, word study, and interactive writing. After the literacy framework 3-hour block, students go to lunch and recess. Upon returning students have 30 minutes for science and social studies and then they go to a specials class for 55 minutes. The rest of the day is spent in a whole group math lesson followed by math workstation time. Students end their day at 3:15 pm.

All instruction in this class is conducted in English. Ms. Brown and the paraprofessional in the room only speak English. All of the students in the room, except two, are emergent bilinguals with Spanish being their home language. Although students are allowed to speak Spanish during the day to each other, instruction, books, and charts in the classroom are all in English. The school district's policy is that students who are identified as English Learners receive 45 minutes of instruction with an ESOL teacher. ESOL teachers provide additional instruction in the classroom also in English. ESOL teachers are encouraged to use the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model where the content is made accessible to students through the use of different techniques. For example ESOL teachers may use picture cards or pre-teach a concept that will be introduced in the classroom, but ESOL teachers do all of this in English. The district follows the state model that suggests that instruction be provided to students in English and that some support may be given in the student's native language. Published each year by the Georgia Department of Education's superintendent of schools, the Title III ESOL resource guide informs Local Education Agencies (LEAs) about the ESOL programs and their effectiveness. The Resource Guide begins by providing general information about ELL students in Georgia. The guide states the following: "We wish for them to understand and function successfully in our American culture. To accomplish these goals, it may be necessary to provide some support in the native language at times" (Georgia Department of Education, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, a student's native language can be used to provide support, but not to provide the overall instruction. The reality for the students in Ms. Brown's class is that all instruction is conducted in English and students have few opportunities to have access to their native language as they are

learning new concepts. This reality also aligns with the reality of many students who are denied the use of their native language to access learning.

Introduction of Focal Students

Five students were selected with the help of the teacher to be the focal students for this study. Most of my time in the classroom was spent observing this group of student as they wrote during the writing workshop time. All students in the group were bilingual and all of them saw themselves as writers. These students were avid talkers in class and enjoyed talking about their writing. Students that are a part of this group have varying academic levels and different levels of English language proficiency. Table 4 gives information about the students' English language proficiency and the language first learned, spoken at home, and most spoken. In the following sections, I will describe each of the individual students, their families, and academic status in the classroom.

Table 4

Focal Students' Use of Language

Student	Age	English Language Proficiency	Language First Learned to Speak	Language Spoken at home	Language most often spoken
Neyda	6	Low	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Pablo	6	High	Spanish	Spanish/English	Spanish/English
Lina	6	High	Spanish/English	Spanish/English	Spanish/English
Maria	5	Low	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Juan	5	Low	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish

Lina

Lina has the strongest linguistic repertoire of the students in the class. She attended Pre-K at this school the previous year and she entered kindergarten being one of the top students in the grade due to the experiences that her family provided. Lina had distinct opportunities than that of the other focal students that allowed her to be one of the top students. For example, Lina's family provided opportunities for Lina to learn to read and write. Her mother purchased a wealth of writing materials and books that allowed Lina to be familiar with books long before she started school. Lina is an eager writer who uses all of the writing time to write and illustrate a larger number of stories. Students in the class saw Lina as a writing expert and often looked to her for help. Lina took on the role of a teacher or an authority figure because of her knowledge of written language. When asked if she liked to write, Lina stated that she is a great writer and that she writes at home and at school. The following interaction illustrates the position of power that Lina had within the group. In this interaction, Neyda asks Lina about what she is writing about. Lina does not tell her and the conversation continues with the other students in the group.

Neyda: What are you writing about?

Lina: Do I have to tell you? No. Leave me alone or I'll write on your finger. Pablo needs it. He told me first.

Maria: Monster High

Neyda: Why you write that?

Juan: Can I use the green one?

Maria: Give it [green crayon] to me. I'm beautiful

Lina: You're not. You're not beautiful

Maria: I'm beautiful. I'm talking about...

Lina: Let me pick. Eeny, miny, miney mo... miny, miny... (May 20, 2013)

Lina lives with both parents at home. Both of her parents were born in Mexico and speak Spanish as their first language. Lina's mother articulates how difficult it was for her to learn a new language when her family moved to the United States when she was in third grade. She states:

I was like mixed back and forth so a lot of the words in Spanish it's hard for me to pronounce right y al igual al English [and same with English] cause I couldn't pick up one or both. So I just do't know if I can say it the right way in English or the right way in Spanish (Parent interview, May 23, 2013)

At home, Lina's mother states that her father makes sure that he speaks Spanish to her and corrects Lina when she says something wrong. As parents, they understand the value of being bilingual. Her mother hopes that she will be fully bilingual by learning how to speak and write Spanish and English.

My main concern is for her to know Spanish and know how to read it because I know English she will pick it up because she is going to use it more, but yeah I want her to be bilingual. (Interview, May 23, 2013)

Both of Lina's parents work and depend on family members to take care of Lina. Lina's mother recently graduated from college and she also worked full-time as a human resource officer. Lina's father attends college and also work full-time at one of the local carpet factories. Lina and Neyda, both part of the group of focal students, are second cousins. They often spend time together after school because Neyda's mother often babysits Lina when her parents are at work or at school.

Neyda

Neyda arrived in the United States just a few days before her kindergarten school year began. Her mother had taken her back to Mexico when she was 3 in order to adjust her legal status in the United States. While Neyda and her mother were in Mexico, her brother and father remained in the US. For an entire two years, Neyda did not see her father or brother. When I met with Neyda's mother for an interview she had just gotten her driver's license.

At home, Neyda's parents speak Spanish and neither of them speaks English. Both of her parents attended school in Mexico and were only able to finish middle school because the secondary school was too far from where they lived. Her father works at a horse farm. Neyda's mother is currently not working. She has been looking for a job, but has not found one. At home, Neyda is helping her mom learn English by reading the books that she takes home and having her write words in a notebook.

She is teaching me. She helps me a lot. For example, she teaches me about the names of fruit or parts of the body. That is how I am learning to speak some words. She is helping me. (Interview, May 7, 2013)

Neyda's connection to her family is very strong. Her mother brings her to school almost every day and eats breakfast with her at school. One day, she brought a note written on behalf of her mother thanking Ms. Brown for teaching her how to read and write (see Figure 2). Her mother had signed her name at the bottom of the note to signal that it was written on her behalf. She tells her mom that she wants to be a teacher in order to help kids like her who do not know how to speak English like her.

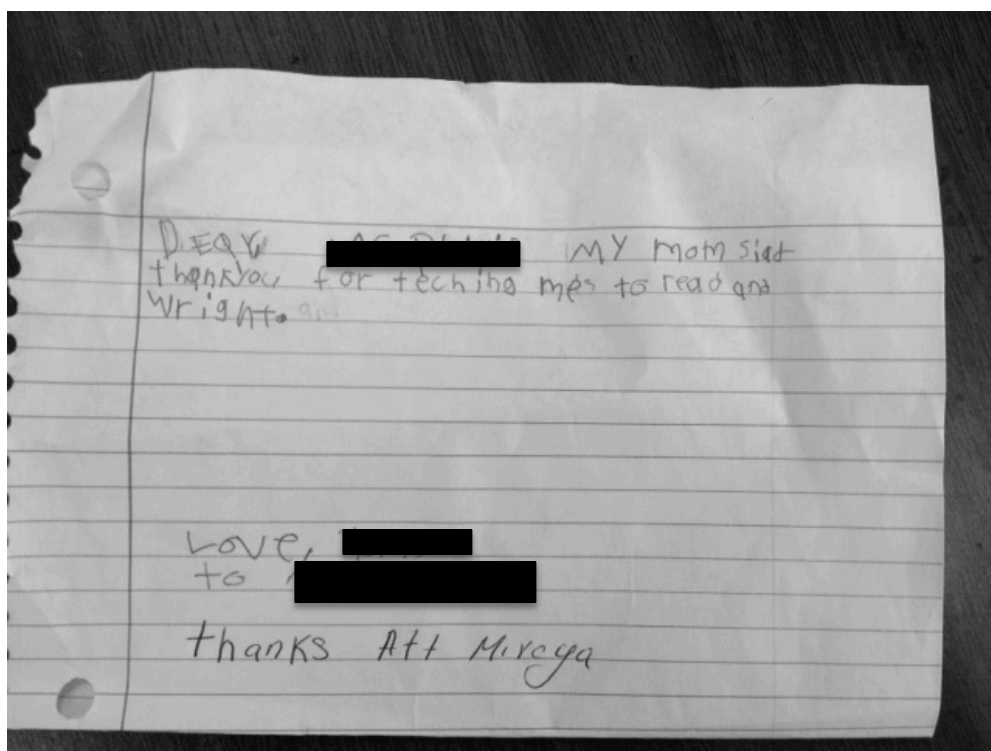


Figure 2. Letter to Ms. Brown.

Neyda began the school year not speaking English. The other students in the class translated for her during the day. As the year progressed, Neyda quickly developed her social language skills. She was able to use Spanish and English as she talks to her peers in the class. Neyda is very interested in learning to read and write. She is eager to please

the teacher and strives to do her work. By the end of the year, Neyda was one of the top students in the class.

Maria

Maria also began the school year speaking very little English, but is very proficient in Spanish. Prior to her year in kindergarten, Maria attended a Headstart program where instruction was provided in English for a year. This program is designed to provide a transition from home to school for students coming from low-income families. This program is different from the lottery funded Pre-K programs in that it is not housed in a school and may or may not provide the same rigor that a Pre-K program housed within an elementary school. At home, Maria's family speaks Spanish. Both of Maria's parents are from Mexico and she was also born in Mexico. Her mother married her father and he petitioned for them to come to the United States. Maria's mother is a custodian at another elementary school in the district. Her father works for a carpet factory. Maria has two younger sisters.

Maria's mother understands the importance of being bilingual and gives Maria advice to make sure that she knows the importance of speaking both languages.

Mija, tu tienes que entender los dos porque un día alguien le va a decir, ayúdame a decir esto y usted no va a saber. [Daughter, you have to understand both [languages] because one day someone may need help and ask you to say something and you may not understand.] (Interview with mother, May 14, 2013)

Maria has become the person in the home who translates, particularly for her mother who does not speak English. Her mother recalls the day that a robbery occurred in her neighborhood and Maria had to translate.

Ya despues el policia le hablaba a ella y no a mi. Asi como la ve de chiquilla, ella me dice. [After that the police officer was speaking to her and not to me. Just like that. You see how small she is and she tells me.] (Interview with mother, May 14, 2013)

Maria's displayed an eagerness to learn from the beginning of the school year. During the day, she is constantly singing songs and laughing with other students. She smiles, nods, and happily works with other students. She is one of the most loved students in the class because of that. Maria is also one of the lowest students in the class academically in both reading and writing. It takes her many days to complete one writing piece, but she perseveres and finishes the writing that she starts. When asked if she was a writer, Maria quickly replied that she was a writer and that she was an expert writer because she used spacing between her words. This is something that Ms. Brown had conferenced with Maria on several times throughout the course of the data collection time.

Pablo

Pablo is a student with strong linguistic skills in both Spanish and English. In class, he often talks to other students who are working close to him. Pablo was born in the United States and has three older siblings and one younger brother. Pablo attended Pre-K at Birchwood. At home, Pablo speaks both Spanish and English. Pablo's mother only speaks Spanish, can understand English when she is spoken to. She states that she is

scared of speaking English although she understands and knows the vocabulary for many of the words. His father is bilingual. Pablo's father works for a food delivery service and his mother is currently a student in a cosmetology school. Pablo has older siblings in high school and middle school who speak both Spanish and English at home. Pablo's mother describes the siblings' interactions at home.

Aveces hablan Español. Aveces hablan Ingles, pero mas hablan Spanglish.

[Something they speak Spanish. Something they speak English, but they mostly speak Spanglish] (Interview, May 1, 2013)

In the classroom, Pablo is one of the lowest students academically. He is also one of the most verbal and advanced in his vocabulary both in English and in Spanish. He often struggles with fine motor skills and has a difficult time completing work in which he has to sit down. For this reason, the writing time is a difficult time for Pablo. Throughout my observations in the classroom, I noticed that Pablo spent much of his time looking and walking around the room during the independent writing time of the writing workshop. He spent many days working on one writing piece and often just completed the pictures without adding words.

Juan

Juan is a much loved student in the classroom. Students seek to interact and play with him during the different parts of the day. He began the year speaking very little English, but he is a very proficient Spanish speaker. Juan's parents both speak Spanish at home. His mother works night shift in a pillow factory and therefore sleeps during the day. His father works during the day as a construction worker. On most days, Juan's

babysitter brings him to school because his father is at work and his mother is sleeping. Juan also has a younger brother. Juan describes how he is teaching his brother how to draw.

You know my little brother is little. He does scribble scrabble when he draws Shrek and you know I just show him how to draw Shrek and I show him to write Spiderman. (Student Interview, May 10, 2013)

During the writing workshop time, Juan writes mostly about superheroes or popular culture characters. He is a great artist and kids often call on him to draw pictures. Juan sees himself as a writer and takes on the roll of helping others during the writing workshop time.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a detail description of the context of this study, including the community that surrounds Birchwood School. I provided a glimpse into the school. The literacy framework that is used in the district and in this school was also discussed. I also provided a detailed description of Ms. Brown, her classroom, and her beliefs about language. And finally, a description of each of the focal students was shared, along with information about their family, use of language, and academic status.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

As stated in previous chapters, this study examined the writing and interactions of five emergent bilingual students in a kindergarten writing workshop setting. The five focal students worked together and individually to compose across genres. They drew upon a variety of resources (e.g., linguistic, cultural, and social) to make sense of and participate in the writing workshop setting. The children relied on and used these resources with varying levels of success. This chapter is organized in terms of the themes that emerged from the data. The first theme focuses on students' knowledge and use of linguistic resources. The second part is focused on the cultural resources that young emergent bilingual students drew upon when engaged in the composing process. The third theme discusses ways in which students engaged in social relationships as they were writing. Lastly, I discuss how the different resources led to positioning of students within the group. I specifically focus on two students, Lina and Maria, and discuss how power and agency played out as these two students engaged with peers during the writing time. Questions guiding the study are: (1) How do emergent bilingual writers participate in writing events? (2) What social, cultural, and linguistic resources do emergent bilingual writers draw upon when engaged in the composing process? and (3) What impact do these resources have on emergent bilingual writers' understandings of the writing process?

Linguistic Knowledge and Use

Focal students in this study drew upon their linguistic knowledge of English and Spanish to participate in classroom writing events. As emergent bilinguals, the children spoke both languages, but with varied levels of proficiency. Writing time became a space for the students to access and use both languages as they navigated the expectations of being a writer and built social relationships. Therefore, the experiences of the focal students were encoded in either one of the two languages and students chose the language in which to communicate those experiences. The language used in conversation depended on the purpose for the conversation. While students accessed both languages in their oral conversations, they only used English in their written text.

As members of the larger classroom community where many students were emergent bilinguals, the focal students were acutely aware of their linguistic abilities in the two languages. They often discussed their varying levels of expertise in speaking either English or Spanish. Students in the group also knew the level of expertise that other students in the group had with language. For example, Neyda's level of proficiency with English becomes a topic of discussion when Pablo and Lina are talking about numbers and being able to count.

Pablo: You know all your numbers. Me too. Except for Neyda and he don't know English. Only a little right [*students often misused pronouns, thus in this statement Isaac was referring to Neyda*]

Lina: And she doesn't know how to count in Spanish. Whenever her mom, she

asks “mami que es 10?” [what is 10?] she say (May 1, 2013)

This interaction between Pablo and Lina demonstrates the awareness that students had about whom within the group was able to speak English, who understood and can speak Spanish, and the varying levels of proficiency for each language. In another interaction, Pablo reveals his linguistic abilities to other students as he explains to Juan what it means to be disqualified from soccer. The three girls join the conversation and begin to talk in Spanish. Pablo maintains that he doesn’t speak Spanish well by stating, “Yo no puedo hablar bien en Español” [I cannot speak Spanish well]. In another example, Lina understood that she had an extensive knowledge of both languages and is offended when Neyda questions this knowledge. Neyda tells Maria that Lina is jealous because they are interacting. The discussion that follows, Lina threatens to tell Ms. Brown that Neyda is telling her that she is jealous.

Neyda: Maria, quieres que the draw Cupid [Maria, do you want me to draw Cupid?]

Lina: Ms. Brown...

Neyda: Esta celosa [she is jealous]

Juan: Quien? [who?]

Neyda: Lina. Te estoy diciendo [Lina. I am telling you]. You don’t know what celosa [jealous] means?

Maria: Oh si, como mi hermana se puso celosa [oh yes, like my sister got jealous]

Lina: A lo mejor es porque estas pretty [maybe it’s because you’re pretty]

Maria: Celososa

Neyda: Celosa (correcting her). Yo estoy diciendo celosa [I am saying jealous]

Lina: Tu dijistes Hermosa [you said beautiful]

Neyda: No. Lina doesn't know Spanish.

Lina: You neither. You call me that. I'm telling... Ms. Brown, Neyda said I don't know Spanish (May 20, 2013)

The focal students' linguistic abilities in both Spanish and English allowed them to navigate both languages depending on the audience and purpose for the talk. The varying abilities provided different levels of easiness in which the way they navigated and used both languages. The students' interactions during the writing workshop ranged in topics and purpose. Some of students were able to fully participate in the group and understand all of the interactions regardless of language used during the interaction; while others, such as Maria, had limited participation within the group based on proficiency in English. Table 5 illustrates the most and least common code co-occurrences when students were using Spanish or when they were switching between Spanish and English. The code co-occurrences are frequency counts of codes in the data.

Table 5:

Code Co-occurrence

	Code switching	Use of Spanish	English
Discussions about illustrations (<i>n</i> =130)	64	17	46

Popular Culture (<i>n</i> =120)	42	16	62
Student Experiences (<i>n</i> =142)	41	24	77
Student Questions to each other (<i>n</i> =223)	56	29	138
Students telling each other what to do (<i>n</i> =83)	21	16	46
Students teaching each other (<i>n</i> =15)	1	0	14
Students helping each other (<i>n</i> =45)	9	3	33
Self-talk (<i>n</i> =37)	0	0	37

This table illustrates the sophisticated way in which the emergent bilingual students in this study understood and used their knowledge of two languages for specific functions. For example, there were a total of 130 discussions that were coded as being discussions about illustrations. When students were having these discussions, they code switched between English and Spanish 64 times, used Spanish exclusively 17 times, and used English 47 times. In contrast to this, students only used English when they were engaging in self-talk. Of the 37 times that students engaged in self-talk, all were exclusively in English

While they were aware of their own linguistic abilities, the five students made choices in which language to use for which purpose. Purposes included (a) using English

to “do school” and to help their peers, (b) using Spanish and English to navigate social relationships with other students and to include everyone in the group and (c) using self-talk .in English during the writing time.

Oral and Written Language

Students in this kindergarten classroom were able to have discussions in both languages while they were writing. However, students were expected to write in English. Often times, students’ oral discussions about what they would write were more complex and detailed than their actual writing. The richness in conversations included discussions in both languages. The following examples showcase the richness in students’ conversations. The examples also demonstrate how students’ writing examples alone do not show this complexity and how writing cannot be separated from talk.

Maria. Maria spent many days working on a story about going to Mexico. While she was writing the story, she had discussions with peers about her story and what she was writing about. The following is an excerpt about that discussion. The actual writing piece only included one page with one sentence and an illustration with a car.

Maria: Ms. Brown, what does this say?

Ms. Brown: Read it to Juan

Maria: I ... you know you can read it

Juan: No. You read it.

Maria: Oh.... I went to Mex-i-co

Juan: I already know Mexico. I am going to Mexico.

Maria: I went

Juan: I went there

Maria: I.. I

Juan: I went to the Mexico (Maria laughs)

Maria: I went to.. I went to... Mexico.. co

Neyda: Maria, porque me lo diste quebrado? (why did you give me the broken one)

Maria: Yo no se [translation: I don't know)

Neyda: Dame otro [give me another]

Juan: Tu no tienes que decirle a ella porque esta quebrado solo. Right? [You don't need to tell her anything because it was already broken]

Maria: Went, I went to Mexico and I eat

Juan: I went to Coco

Maria: I went to Mexico (clapping). I just wrote that right here. I went to Mexico. I had fun. You know this I cannot write

Juan: No because I leave it right there. Right Maria I leave mine right here?

Neyda: I'm going to tell.

Juan: There is one over here.

Lina: It's the same. It's the same.

Maria: yeah they're the same.

Juan: I put it right there.

Maria: Now how I'm going to color this. This color is my sister.

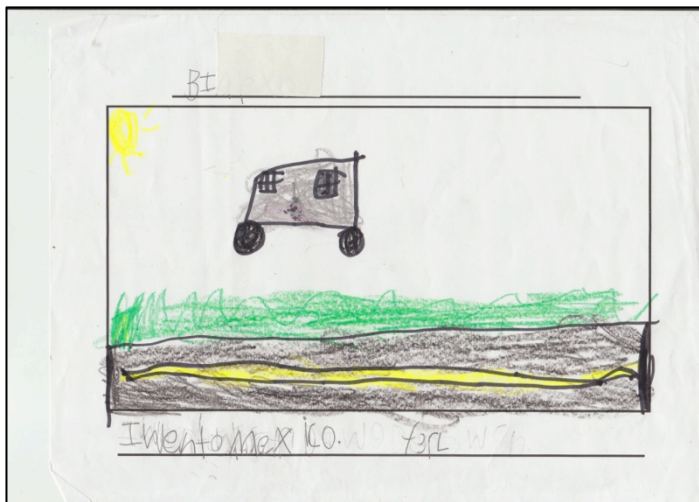


Figure 3. I went to Mexico.

Neyda. Neyda was one of the students who produced many pieces of writing. The following excerpt is from when Neyda was writing a story about watching the movie the Titanic. This excerpt shows how students discussed the process of drawing and writing as they engaged in it. It also shows how pieces of writing had a collaborative nature in which peer assisted each other in writing and drawing. Neyda's final piece included three pages about the watching the movie Titanic. This excerpt only includes the discussion of the writing of the second page.

Neyda: There was a people. There was a little baby here look. It was a girl.

Maria: She's little.

Neyda: And here's the white one.

Maria: You should use baby blue.

Neyda: We got into the water

Maria: Do we have pink?

Neyda: I need black please

Maria: Do we have pink? We don't have pink

Lina (self-talk): My...my...and..me..and

Neyda: I need marker please.. please

Maria: (self-talk) me and my puppy

Neyda: Se fueron a la agua [they went in the water]

Neyda: Whoa

Neyda: Lina, can you draw me stars?

Lina: Okay

Neyda: Because it was night and then they want to see you.

Lina: How many?

Neyda: Like twenty

Lina: Twenty!?

Juan: Ay, ay, ay, es mucho [that is a lot]

Neyda: Ten

Lina: Okay ten.

Neyda: And then I need yellow please. I need yellow please. I need yellow beep, beep, I need yellow bee, bee, beep!

Maria: Si pinta el yellow. Si pinta [this yellow writes. It draws]

(silence at the table) talking in the background

Maria: This is a big one

Neyda: Do you know what is it called the movie the Titanic. Like a movie called Titanic. Okay. Titanic by... Neyda... /b/ but.. Lina, how do you spell "but"

Lina: Butt?

Neyda: No. "but" but was still alive. /b/ /b/

Lina: "B" no Neyda.. B-U-O-T

Neyda: But they.. Hey I forgot to draw her hair. Hair.hair.hair. (laughs)

But they was... was... still.. /st/ /i/ /l/ I already spell that... was.. still...

Juan: B-U-T

Neyda: I already know... was.. /st/ /all/

Maria: All about dogs...dogs.. mmmmmmm...

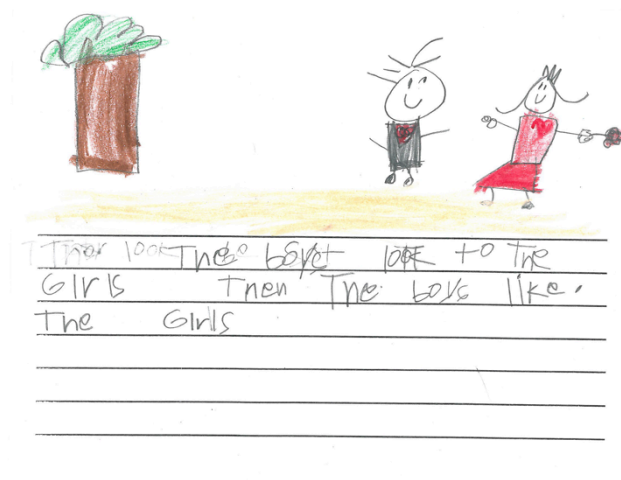
Neyda: do you have brown?

Lina: No. give it back to us okay beautiful?

Neyda: beautiful? (laughs).... They..

Maria: mmmmm...mmm.. /i/ /i/ /d/ /d/

Neyda: they can make... they (May 8, 2013)



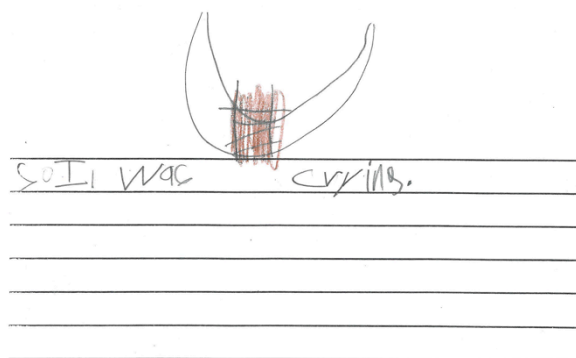
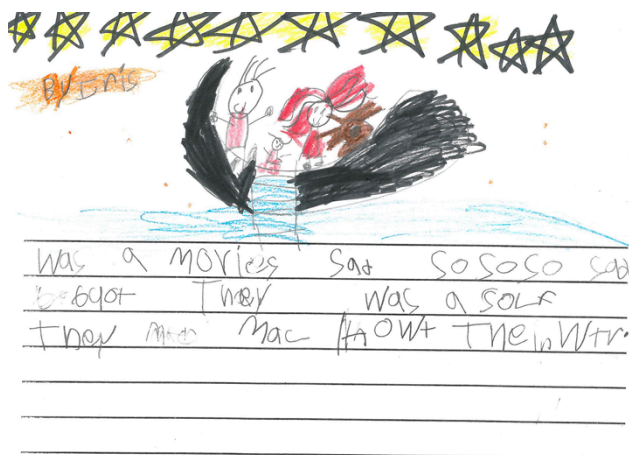


Figure 4. Page 1. The boys look to the girls then the boys like the girls. Page 2. Was at movies sad so so so sad but they was alive. They make it out the water. Page 3. I was crying.

Juan. During writing time, Juan had conversations with all of the other focal students. He often discussed what he was writing about and liked to hear about what the other students were also writing about. The following excerpt is an example of the type of conversations that Juan had with other students. In this example, he is discussing playing soccer while

engaging in a conversation about the rules of soccer with the other focal students. The writing sample that was produced as he engaged in this conversation follows the excerpt.

Juan: This is David and me.

Pablo: That wasn't me

Lina: No. when you were not here Francisco pushed me.

Pablo: When?

Lina: Yesterday and I push him back. You know those things that he pushed. He pushed me fast and then I fall down.

Juan: You know Francisco he pushed me como playing soccer ball and in soccer ball you not can push.

Pablo: I know how to play soccer. I know everything about soccer.

Juan: Me too

Neyda: The hand not there

Pablo: Okay, how you kick the ball?

Juan: With your leg.

Pablo: How you kick it out?

Juan: Umm..umm. What?

Pablo: How you get kicked out?

Juan: No. You can't get kicked out.

Pablo: How you get disqualified?

Maria: Disqualified?

Lina: I hear in my movie Monster High she said.. "Monster High is disqualified"

Maria: Ahh

Neyda: Eso es de verdad [that is real] Monster High

Juan: Nah. Monster High no es de verdad [Monster High is not real]

Maria: she's fiction and that means it's not real

Pablo: She's non-fiction. She's fiction. She not real.

(Later on in the same day's conversation)

Juan: Pablo, you were number 10

Pablo: I wasn't number 10

Juan: I'm pretending you're number 10. What number you are?

Pablo: I'm number 10

Juan: Yeah?

Pablo: Yeah (May 9, 2013)



Figure 5. I was playing soccer ball with David. I get goal in so I win soccer ball. It was fun.

Pablo. Pablo was the student in the group that had many interactions with other students, but few were focused on writing. Pablo spent many days on one piece of writing and most of his time was spent drawing. Pablo often discussed ownership of crayons or tools with other students. The following are two examples of the type of conversations that Pablo had with other students about writing. These examples occurred as Pablo worked on a story about going to the park. The writing sample that he wrote while having these discussions follows.

Pablo: Hey how do you spell friend?

Juan: why... with...

Pablo: I need to borrow an eraser Juan.

Juan: I need it.

Pablo: It's right here.

Pablo: (reading his paper) I was riding my bike.

Lina: (reading her story) I am with my uncle.

Lina to Juan: Let me see your paper.

Pablo: b-i-ke... how do you spell it /b/ /i/ /k/ (April 19, 2013)

Ms. Brown: with my... What are you forgetting that Jesus told you to do

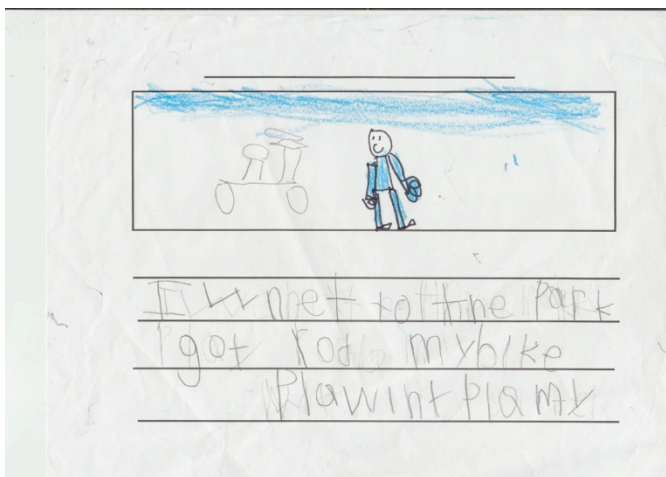
Pablo: Spacing.... Ms. Brown...

Ms. Brown: Okay. So read this.

Pablo: I went to the park. I rode my bike with my mom

Ms. Brown: Okay

Pablo: I going to write my sister. (April 22, 2013)



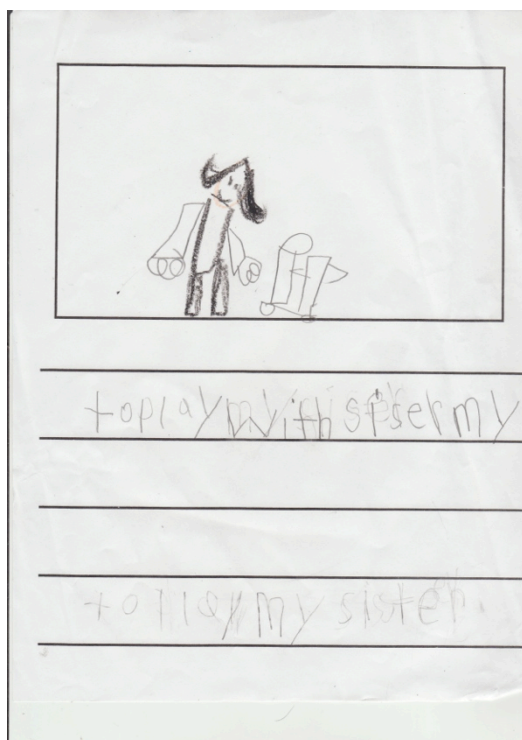


Figure 6. Page 1: I went to the park I got ride my bike. Play with play my. Page 2: to play with sister my.

Lina. Lina was the student who was the most prolific writer in the group. Her linguistic abilities in both languages allowed her to engage in rich conversations about her stories with her peers and teachers. Although Lina, like all other students, were expected to write in English, she was the only one during the study that received encouragement to attempt to write in a word in Spanish. The following conversation is an example of the conversations that Lina often had with Ms. Brown about her writing. In this example, Ms. Brown encourages Lina to write the word “padrino” which means godfather in English on her paper. The writing examples that follow show how Lina took this on in her writing after having this conversation with Ms. Brown. The story that she wrote about going to Chicago was 6 pages long. I have included the first 3 pages.

Ms. Brown: Okay read the story. Let’s listen to the story for a minute

Lina: I went to Chicago. Then I went on a boat. Then it was rainy. It was sunny day. Then my mom buy a snack for me. Then we got on the boat. Then I played on the pool with. I wait with my friend Marco. Then we got off the pool

Ms. Brown: Whoa. That's a pretty cool story.

Juan: My turn

Lina: Then it was raining.

Ms. Brown: Wait, so at the beginning of the story it was raining. Um what I want you to think about is.. This story.. as a writer is again you feelings. I don't know what Lina was feeling at this time and maybe I want to be able to know how you were feeling in this story. What made you excited? Also, some things that I noticed....If you say as a writer that you should already know how to do. Then it was raining. What should I be seeing here?

Lina: The word with -ing

Ms. Brown: So as a writer.. you need to be thinking about the sounds and what you already know how to use

Lina: It was raining hard and my padrino wet his shirt

Ms. Brown: Well see I didn't even know that. It was raining. You just said it was raining hard and somebody got wet with their shirts so that a great detail. You could add that to your story because that makes the story that somebody could understand. Then it could remind somebody of a time when it was raining really hard and maybe that happened to them. Do you think you could do that? Then it was raining and then you could start another page here.. It was raining really hard and his shirt got wet?

Lina: My padrino

Ms. Brown: Beledino?

Neyda: Padrino

Ms. Brown: Padrino?

Lina: Padrino

Ms. Brown: Okay. Well tell me that.

Lina: Oh, I can use my sounds in Spanish

Ms. Brown: yes.

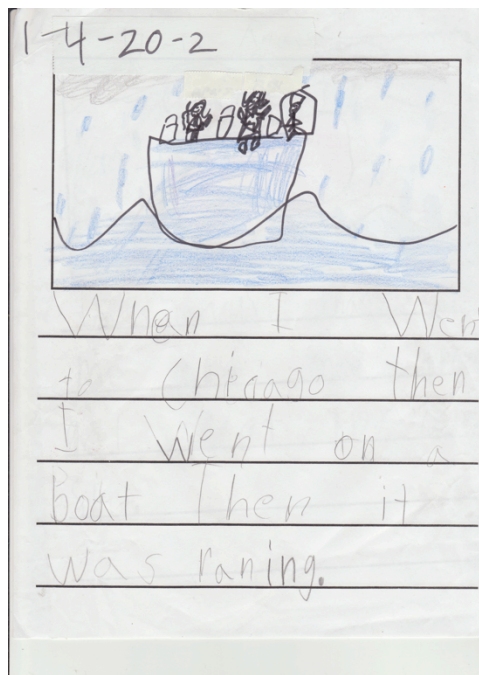
Lina: You can still use sounds in Spanish

Ms. Brown: You can use your sounds in Spanish. Same things.

Ms. Brown: Right

Neyda: How do you call in English padrino?

Ms. Brown: Padrino? Well just use your sounds in Spanish and write it for me there. (April 18, 2013)



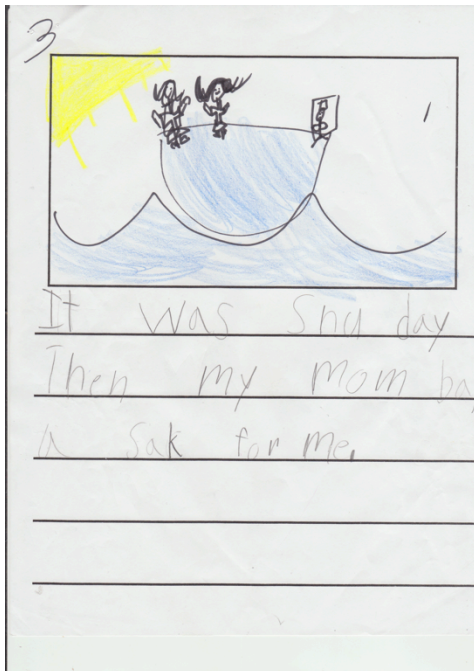
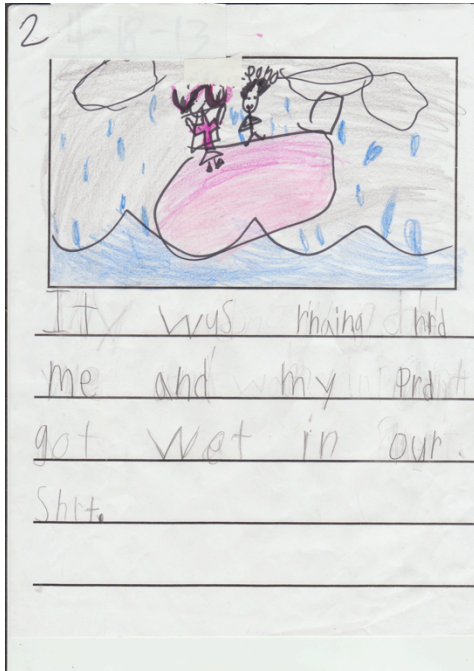


Figure 7. Page 1: When I went to Chicago then I went on a boat then it was raining. Page 2: It was raining hard me and my padrino got wet in our shirt. Page 3: It was sunny day then my mom buy a snack for me.

Appropriating Teacher Talk to “Do School”

One interesting finding is that students in the study were aware of the status of the English language in the classroom. The five emergent bilingual students often appropriated the school discourse, which was in English, as they helped each other with writing. The following examples illustrate how students adopt the discourse pattern of the teacher, which is all in English, as they help or teach other students in the group.

Pablo: Use your words. Neyda say it slow. (April 22, 2013)

Lina: Say it slowly and think about it more (May 7, 2013)

Juan: I said I do like yours cause you’re doing your job (April 30, 2013)

Neyda: You need to write nice and neat (April 22, 2013)

The way in which students appropriated the teacher talk became even more evident during the second student interview, when students talked about what it means to be a writer. Students were able to articulate what Ms. Brown had told them about being a writer.

Mrs. Rodriguez: Why do you think she thinks you guys are writers?

Pablo: Because we learn.

Neyda: Because we color and then we do words nice and neat.

Lina: And she says you need to write your words and they need to match your picture and you need to write them nice and neat and the capitals should be first and you need to write them really nice and neat. Your picture too.

Pablo: And there is a paper in your folder and it's green and yellow and it has nice good writers and you need to write what is right there.

Mrs. Rodriguez: What else does Ms. Brown tell you about writing?

Lina: She tells us to do a great job and to stay in your author's chair.

Mrs. Rodriguez: Let's let Maria tell us about what Ms. Brown tell you about writing.

Maria: To raise your hand and stay in your author's chair.

Neyda: You cannot scream at Ms. Brown like this "Ms. Brown, Ms. Brown!" .

You can't shout out. (Student Interview, April 19, 2013)

During this part of the interview, students were asked to consider the things that Ms. Brown told them about being a writer. Students articulated what they had heard during the writing instruction. Lina, the student with the highest English proficiency, was able to articulate many of the expectations that Ms. Brown talked to the students about for the writing time. Maria repeated that students needed to remain in their author's chair. This is something that she had discussed before. Students also used the teacher talk that they heard to communicate with or to help other students. These examples show that students appropriated the school discourse and used it as they interacted within the group. School talk became a tool as students navigated ways to help each other write in English in the classroom.

Using Spanish and English For Multiple Purposes

Emergent bilingual writers in this study used code switching for a variety of purposes. Gort (2012) identifies code switching as “the most distinctive behavior of bilingual speakers and an important component of communicative competence of proficient bilinguals” (p. 46). Focal students used code switching in the classroom during writing workshop. Gort (2012) contents that code switching “appears to be a complex skill that develops as part of emergent bilinguals’ communicative competence” (p. 47) For this study, mixing in languages is considered code switching when students use the elements from the two languages in the same utterance or in a stretch of conversation (Genesee, 2000; 2002). Students used codeswitching for varying purposes. The different purposes included the sharing of experiences as they were writing, navigating the social relationships with each other, and including all students in conversations about writing. Although all students had some knowledge of both languages, the levels of proficiency varied. In using a mix of both languages as they were writing, students were able to include all of the students in the conversations.

Focal students used different types of codeswitching. At times, students used code switching at the lexical level when discussing terms that were culturally relevant terms (Gort, 2012). An example of this is when Lina states, “My padrino [godfather] got wet.” Lina uses the Spanish word for godfather because despite discussing this topic in an English only context. Other words that were used that were related to family members were *madrina* [godmother], *tia* [aunt], *papi* [daddy], and *mami* [mami]. In using these terms, Lina and other students, maintained these names as relevant in any context because they are “related to the children’s social and cultural experiences within their

bilingual and bicultural community” (Gort, 2012, p. 62). Other times, focal students use codeswitching at the sentence level. The following example shows how Neyda is able to codeswitch in one conversation by mixing Spanish and English sentences. It also shows how students used both languages to have a conversation. In this example, Neyda is writing about Draculaura’s birthday and discussing what she is drawing with Lina and Maria. Draculaura was the Monster High characters that the students talked the most about.

Neyda: Look here is him birthday

Lina: That’s not Draculaura’s favorite things.

Maria: Porque le echates feo? [why did you add the ugly?]

Neyda: Es que no sabia [It’s because I didn’t know] Querias hacer her ponytail little. Pretend I was drawing Draculaura. Draculaura is so little right here. (May 15, 2013)

English was the language used for formal instruction and learning in this classroom. As students navigated the unofficial space in the classroom, they made use of their knowledge of two languages. Both languages were also used to have conversations during composing process. During the independent writing time, the focal students engaged in conversations with each other in both languages about a wide range of topics, including family and home. Although students always wrote in English, they often discussed what they were writing about with other students using both languages. The following vignette illustrates how Maria uses a combination of English and Spanish to discuss an experience that she is writing about. The focal students are having a

conversation as Maria is writing her story about how she got a little dog. Maria begins the conversation as she is coloring the dog that she has drawn.

Maria: Yo en la casa tengo un perrito. Yo ya tengo un perrito.

[I have a dog at my house. I already have a puppy]

Juan: Yo tambien[me too]

Maria: Lo encontre en la pulga. Era free. [I found it at the flea market. It was free]

Neyda: When is she going to give me the thing Maria?

Juan: My brother gave me a baby doll

Maria: Y se hizo popo en mi troca [and he pooped in my truck]

Neyda and Juan: Ewww

Lina: I can draw Juan

Maria: Y tiene una casita [and he has a little house]

Juan: Neyda, Neyda, you know Briana she gave me a little dog

Maria: Mi papi le hizo su casita a el perrito [My daddy made a little house for the puppy]

Neyda: You need to write nice and neat (April 22, 2013)

As Maria begins to construct her story about how she got a new dog, she shares her story mostly in Spanish with the other students. The other students listen to Maria's story and

reply by providing some kind of feedback. Although the final product for Maria's story included a simple sentence that said "I have a dog," the process of constructing the story with her friends was much more complex and she was able to use her linguistic resources in Spanish to describe this event in much more detail than in her written story.

Since Spanish was the language spoken at home for all the focal students, student often shared these experiences with each other in Spanish. In the following vignette, Maria and Neyda are discussing the often-discussed topic of the television show *Monster High*. Maria shares the conversation that she had with her mother about wanting to watch *Monster High* and switches to speaking only in Spanish as that was the language in which the experience occurred.

Maria: I'm writing about the aquarium. This is our aquarium.. This is ours.. This is ours. (laughs).. What's that?

Neyda: A t.v.!

Maria: A t.v.? (laughs)

Neyda: Lina, remember the t.v? You was watching something

Maria: No, you wasn't.

Neyda: A gentleman was outside. I need to watch a *Monster High* and It was Abbey's 16th birthday and Abbey seen for her a present.

Maria: Sabes que? Sabes que va salir *Monster High* at 2'o clock. Y tu ya la vistes? [Do you know what? Do you know what *Monster High* is going to show at

2' o'clock and have you already seen it?]

Neyda: Uh-uh

Maria: Oh, yo no porque mi tele no se miraba. No se miraba y deje "I want to watch Monster High!" y le dije, "Mami, se delata mucho para que salga Monster High. Yo quiero Monster High" [Oh because you could not see the television. It was not showing and I said "I want to watch Monster High" and I said, "Mami, it takes too long until Monster High comes out. I want Monster High"] (May 13, 2013)

As Maria shares her experience at home, she recounts the experience in the language that was used (Spanish). Since Maria's mother only speaks Spanish, she makes sure that she describes that experience using the language that was used. Through discussing experiences like this one, the focal students were able to share their home experiences with each other in the home language. Through the sharing of these experiences students also got to know more about the other students' lives outside of school.

Focal students also used Spanish or a combination of both languages to establish and social relationships with each other. Students' relationships with each other were fluid and changed often on a day-to-day basis. Students used English as well as Spanish as they asked each other questions and they told each other what to do. Questions ranged from students requesting help to getting clarification about each other's stories. The following excerpts illustrate the range of questions that the focal students asked each other as they were writing in English.

Maria: Eso parese como un leon. Que es?[that looks like a lion. What is it?] (April 19, 2013)

Neyda: Como se hace un bikini? [how do you make [draw] a bikini?] (May 8, 2013)

Lina: Tu tienes la word Draculaura alli? [do you have the word Draculaura there?] (May 15, 2013)

Students asked each other many questions as they were having discussions about their official and unofficial worlds. Students also used their knowledge of both languages to tell each other what to do. In the following example, Lina is telling Neyda that she needs to stay in her space. The two girls are having an argument over space at the table. Lina wants Neyda to stay in her space and to keep her paper in her folder.

Lina: Neyda, don't put your papers in my folder. Tienes tu folder aqui tambien.

[You have your folder here too]

Neyda: Esque no lo puedo quitar. [It's because I can't take it away]

Lina: Pues quitalo para tras. Neyda, quitale el otro paper. Neyda, stop stepping on my paper. [Well take it back. Neyda, move back the other paper] (April 19, 2013)

Emergent bilingual writers drew upon their repertoire of two languages as they discussed their writing and illustrations. Students often asked questions about the illustrations or to elaborate on what was being written. They also provided feedback on each other's drawing and writing. In the vignette, Neyda, Lina, and Maria are discussing a story that

Neyda is working on.

Neyda: Look here is him birthday

Lina: That's not Draculaura's favorite things.

Maria: Porque le hiciste feo? [why did you make him ugly?]

Neyda: Es que no sabia [It's because I didn't know] Querias hacer [do you want to make] her ponytail little? Pretend I was drawing Draculaura. Draculaura is so little right here.

In this exchange, the 3 girls in the focal group are discussing Neyda's drawing of two Monster High characters and also providing some feedback. Maria is able to contribute to the conversation by using her linguistic abilities in Spanish. In continuing this conversation in both languages, Maria was able to participate in this conversation. These young writers ability to mix both languages as they discuss writing-related topics and popular culture, and provided a way in which they could include others in the conversation. In the following excerpt, Neyda and Maria are once again discussing Draculaura, one of the main characters in Monster High.

Neyda: I'm going to draw the principal

Maria: The principal of Draculaura. She's beautiful?

Neyda: No. Se quita su cabeza [No. she takes off her head]

Maria: Eww

Neyda: Dijiste [you said] “she’s so beautiful” and I said “no, se quita la cabeza” [no, she takes off her head] De verdad. No estoy mintiendo [It’s true. I am not lying.]

Maria: El canal de mi papi. Una niña era calabera y alguien le quebro su cabeza [on my daddy’s channel. A little girl and somebody broke her head] En serio y estaba muerta [For real, and she was dead]

Neyda: Quieres que te ayude [do you want me to help you?]

Maria: Nah, mejor como Jaden. Jaden le hace, “nah” [Like Jaden...Jaden says, “nah”] (May 15, 2013)

In this excerpt, Maria and Neyda make use of both languages as they discuss characters in the Monster High show. This also shows how Maria’s knowledge about the show is limited, but Neyda is able to include her in the conversation and writing about Monster High through their talk about the show.

Students in this study used their varying knowledge of two languages for multiple purposes. Students used codeswitching when discussing their writing with each other. Students also used both languages as they shared their personal experiences as well as their experiences with popular culture. Students were able to also navigate social relationships with each other through the use of English and Spanish. The access to both languages, although with varying proficiencies, allowed the opportunity for all focal students to be included in conversations about writing.

Self-talk

Focal students used English when they engaged in self-talk as they wrote their stories. Self-talk included students reading their stories to themselves or talking themselves through how to write a word. Students used self-talk as they were writing for different purposes. Maria used self-talk to remind herself of where she could find the words “all about.” Students used self-talk to talk through what they were writing, like Juan’s example of spelling “bad guy” and hearing the sounds in the words. Students also used self-talk to narrate or announce their progress in writing. Neyda tells herself what she is going to write about next and then continues to talk to herself as she writes the words. In talking to themselves in English, students used what they learned about how to do writing from the teacher and talked to themselves about and through this process. The following examples demonstrate the kinds of self-talk that students engaged in.

Maria: I know how to spell “All About” the aquarium cause I’m going to copy my paper (May 9, 2013)

Juan: Hey, where is my pencil? Oh, there it is. (self-talk) /b/ /a/ /d/ bad guy...bad guy.. bad.. have ...was.... Fighting.... The...Power /r/ /r/ against the power ranger. /r/ and.. (May 20, 2013)

Neyda: I’m going to write a song..... (self-talk) and... and.. and...a...and... a... little....I...I...and a little girl said... said...s /ai/.. said ... sai /d/ I’m doing a music and a little girl and... (May 15, 2013)

In using this self-talk, students also adopted the language of instruction as they talked themselves through the process of writing a story or a word. Students used the

strategies modeled by Ms. Brown to talk to themselves. The following exemplifies how Juan uses self-talk to talk through what he is writing the word “saw.”

Juan: (self-talk) I went with

Juan: (self-talk) I went with this and I saw /aww/ saw /aww/ How you spell /aw/?

Juan (self-talk): I went were it was and I saw.... (May 7, 2013)

On three different occasions, Juan talks to himself as he is writing his story. When he is writing the word “saw.” Juan practices saying the sounds in the word just like the teacher models how to hear and record sounds in words. Juan even asks himself the question as he is writing about the spelling of the word saw. The focal students engaged in self-talk during the writing process, but did so only in English. By engaging in this self-talk only in English, students establish that they understand that English is the language of official learning in this classroom. Thus demonstrating that these very young students understood the different status of languages within the classroom setting. Emergent bilingual students in this study used sophisticated ways of using their linguistic resources. Students were able to make use of their varying proficiencies in both languages to “do school” and help others in the group. Students also used their knowledge of Spanish to navigate social relationships and to discuss their stories as they were writing. Students’ sophisticated use of language is also evidenced in the way that students used both languages to include everyone in the group in conversations about their writing.

Cultural Resources

Focal students in this study drew from a rich repertoire of cultural resources as they were writing. Students were able to use a wealth of experiences that they lived with

their families to write stories. Students were also able to draw upon their experiences with popular culture. These experiences with popular culture provided students with rich writing topics that were seamlessly weaved between the world of school and the world of make believe characters. In particular, the show *Monster High* became a prominent topic of conversation among the students. Songs also provided students with important membership in the group. Students used songs as they were writing to solidify this membership and also to have fun while they were writing. These songs provided students with a way to continue to build their social network within the group. The following sections will focus on the rich repertoire of cultural resources that students were able use as they engaged in the social work of writing.

Monster High and Power Rangers

Writing about topics of popular culture allowed students to slip into different personas. Students often pretended to be a certain character and they acted out this belief in conversation with students in the group. One show that students in focal group often discussed was “*Monster High*.” This television show, launched in 2010 by Mattel Inc. and shown on Nickelodeon, is a widely popular show about children of famous monsters (e.g., Frankenstein, Dracula). These characters include Frankie Stein, Draculaura, and Clawdia Wolf among many others. The characters attend Monster High. *Monster High*’s slogan is “*Be Yourself. Be Unique. Be a Monster.*” The show has inspired a franchise that includes music videos, video games, clothing, toys, and many other items, particularly marketed toward girls. Figure 8 shows a screenshot of the *Monster High* website that includes games, application downloads, and other activities related to *Monster High*.



Figure 8. Screenshot of monsterhigh.com

The most popular character among the students in this group was a character named Draculaura, the daughter of Count Dracula. In the following vignette, Lina and Neyda are writing about Draculaura's 1600th birthday. The girls are recalling the events that happened in the television show and are writing about it collaboratively. In this example, Lina asks Neyda to pretend and they alter events as if they are in the story about Draculaura's 1600th birthday.

Lina: No. Clawd didn't give her present cause Clawd give her... Draculaura was dreaming about the stuff she got for her birthday. Oh I know, pretend she's dreaming bout that. Just pretend

Juan: Baby blue

Lina: Let me draw a talking bubble and she was dreaming about presents. She wanted presents and then she wanted a...

Neyda: I know. He want a necklace

Lina: Okay. Let me draw it. Pretend it's inside there and Oh yeah she has a necklace!

Neyda: And he has a ...

Lina: Yeah hearts and.... I need to write the number 16... 1 and a 6

Maria: They're so happy

Neyda: And then Valentine get her and they was fighting. You do that

Lina: Let's make this long because huele feo [it smells bad] Ya merito se cayo[it almost fell]. Color that green and brown. Yes. It was green and kind of brown.

You color green first and I'll color brown. Okay, now color green. Neyda... color pretty. Neyda....

Neyda: Draculaura is pink

Pablo: No tienen pink. Look Lina, it can work very good. It's pink. You want it?

Maria: Where his shoes?

Lina: I'll draw them tomorrow. Okay? Ya merito se va a caer [She is almost going to fall]. Now we'll just draw a 6 cause...

Neyda: Let's color that

Lina: No. Let me draw it. Okay, now tonight she was coming down. She's a cat

(May 6, 2013)

As the two students discuss the events of Draculaura's 1600th birthday, they begin to add their interpretations to the chain of events that they watched on the television show.

Hence, the girls were using the popular media as a resource as they wrote this story together in the classroom. The following is the story about Draculaura's birthday that the Neyda and Lina illustrated.

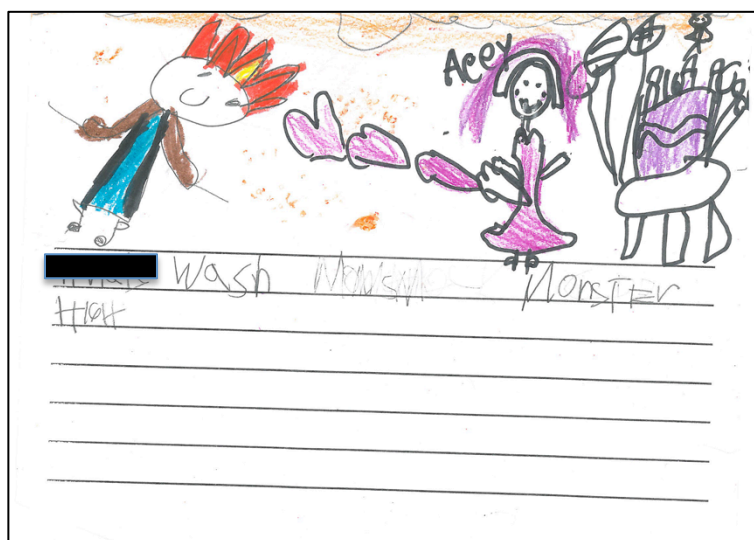


Figure 9: Lina watch Monster High.

Once again, the knowledge of what happened in the episode about Draculaura's 1600th birthday provided a rich story that students could tell orally. These characters from Monster High were as central to the students' lives as the real stories about going places. Students discussed them with confidence and the pretending games helped them as they drew and wrote about them.

Another popular culture topic in the class was the show “Power Rangers.” This show is a series that first aired in 1993 and has continued for 20 seasons. The current seasons air on Nickelodeon. The show’s characters include young people who morph into Rangers, each with a special power. The franchise also includes an extensive line of toys, clothing, and action figures. The topic of Power Rangers was a topic that interested Juan and that he often discussed as he wrote about it. In the following example, Juan talks to Maria and Lina about his illustrations of Power Rangers and what he is going to draw.

Maria: Oohh. I was like that. I look everywhere and still not find the top. What’s that?

Oh, it’s a Power Ranger. Oh (laughs)

Juan: I was like ya, ya, ya, ya, ya

Lina: I’m just going to do a smiley face.

Juan: They don’t have a smiley face.

Maria: No?

Juan: No, they got a samurai

Maria: Oh, but they cannot be

Juan: I watch Power Rangers

Lina: Hey, remember the pencils and these go there.

Juan: I'm going to do a fire in his sword. On the red Power Ranger because the red power ranger has fire on his sword right?

Lina: Yes, it has fire.

Juan: He got a sharp sword. He has three swords.

Lina: It can make you die.

Juan: This is a spada. [sword]

Neyda: El hace mal [he does wrong]

Maria: He's going to win.

Juan: Super sword

Maria: I like that for here.

Juan: With fire.

Maria: Fire (April 19, 2013)

Figure 10 shows the illustrations that Juan was discussing with the other focal students in the group. In discussing his knowledge about this popular culture topic, Juan positions himself as a Power Ranger expert within the group. He answers questions from the group with confidence and demonstrates his knowledge about the topic.

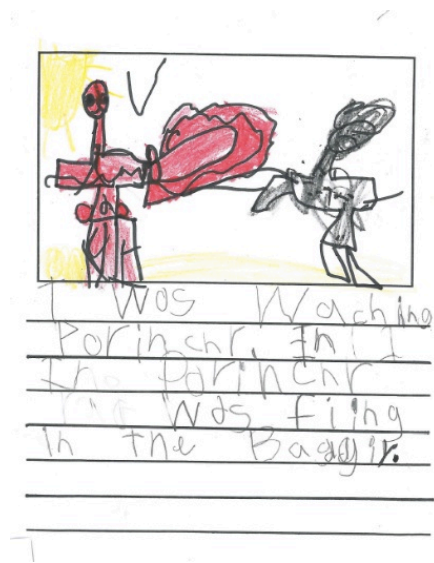


Figure 10. I was watching Power Rangers and Power Rangers was fighting and the bad guy.

Songs

Students also used music media as a resource when they were writing. Similar to Dyson's (1993) work, focal students used songs "in the social context of unofficial play" (p. 141). Students sang songs as they composed and other students joined in to accompany those that were singing. For the most part, these songs were unrelated to the written words that students were working on, but they played an important role in the unofficial world of play that students navigated in and out of as they wrote. These songs were ways that students also confirmed their membership within the group. In the following excerpt, students sing a song together. This song titled "Fire Burning" was a very popular song interpreted by reggae musician Sean Kingston. This song was not related to any of the writing that the students were engaged in.

Lina: (singing) Somebody call 9-1-1 Shawty fire burning on the dance floor

whoa. Shawty call 9-1-1

All singing: shawty fire burning on the dance floor.. whoa..

Neyda: Somebody call 9-1-1. Shawty fire burning on the dance floor

Juan: Somebody call 9-1-1

Maria: 2-2-2

Juan: Somebody call 9-9-9. Shawty on the dance floor.

All singing: Whoa

Lina: Somebody call 9-1-1.. la.la.la.la.la. ay, ay, ay

Juan: (in a deep voice) Somebody call 9-1-1.. Shawty fire burning on the dance floor.. whoa (laughs) (May 8, 2013)

While students were singing this song, Ms. Brown reprimanded them for singing during the writing workshop time and asked two of the students to move their clips for behavior. Despite getting in trouble, the students continue with the song and encourage each other to take turns singing. When Maria doesn't know the song that her friends are singing, she makes up her own numbers and continues with playfulness of the song. Although she doesn't know the song, she understands that the others in the group do and she wants to maintain her membership within the group and therefore makes up words to the song. As she makes up these words, the other students don't mind and continue to sing the song.

The songs that the students sang during the writing time were something that all students participated in and this was different from discussions about popular media in

which the girls for the most part discussed Monster High and the boys focused on Power Rangers. There were also times when songs were related to stories that students were writing. For example, in one occasion Neyda is writing a pretend story about her birthday and she includes the other focal students in the story. When she draws Lina, she tells her that she is going to draw her singing a song. The following example illustrates how songs also permeated the stories that students wrote about. Neyda begins to sing the song Bon Bon (Boom, Boom) by the rapper Pitbull.

Lina: I told you okay? I'm going to draw mis zapatos [my shoes]

Neyda: And this is me

Lina: Okay, I draw me. Over here with you (with Neyda)

Neyda: You were like "oohh, let's rock this party"

Lina: I'm going to draw my hand up at the sky

Neyda: And then the music "boom, boom, boom, boom yo quiero estar contigo"

[I want to be with you]

Maria: Oh, I know that song

Lina: I know it first

Neyda: Yo la cante [I sang it]

Neyda: Boom, boom, boom, yo quiero estar contigo [I want to be with you]

Lina: I know that song

Neyda: Okay, we are going to sing the song and it's going to be beautiful okay?

It's Monster High. We're going to practice it okay guys?

Lina: I can't

Neyda: Lina, you need...

Lina: I want to do my own show

Neyda: Lina, we are going to practice it in the car

Lina: No (May 13, 2013)

Once again, Maria states excitedly that she knows the song that the other students are singing, but is put down by Lina. Knowledge of the song provides access into what is considered cool or important within the group and therefore it's important for students that they know the songs. Overall, students' unofficial world played a key role in the students' writing in the official classroom world. Students used the unofficial worlds of popular media characters and songs as they wrote during the writing workshop time. These "textual toys" (Dyson, 2003) provided students with opportunities to enhance the writing and to establish their membership within the group.

Family Experiences

Students in this study were able to draw from rich experiences involving their families. This counters the deficit perspective that views students who are learning a second language and who come from low socio-economic households as having limited experiences. Students represented their world at home to other students in the class through oral storytelling and written stories about home and family. These stories about

home and family were highly encouraged in the classroom. Students were guided to write stories about events that had really occurred. Many of these stories included students' immediate family as well as those that they considered family. For example, students often made references to *padrinos* and *madrinas* in their writing. In many Latin American countries, godparents are seen as part of the family and there is an understanding that godparents will step in in case something ever happens to a child's parents. Thus, godparents were often written about and discussed as if they were immediate family members. Experiences with families varied from everyday events about going to the park to special celebrations and events, such as family graduations and going to the hospital.

Stories about everyday experiences were valued in the classroom. Students drew upon the rich cultural experiences that they had at home and used these experiences as a resource in learning to write. As Ms. Brown conferenced with students about these stories, she could be heard asking students to add more details about their story to their writing, as it was common for students to have rich narrative, but very simple writing. The following examples showcase the type of writing that students composed that stemmed from their experiences with family.

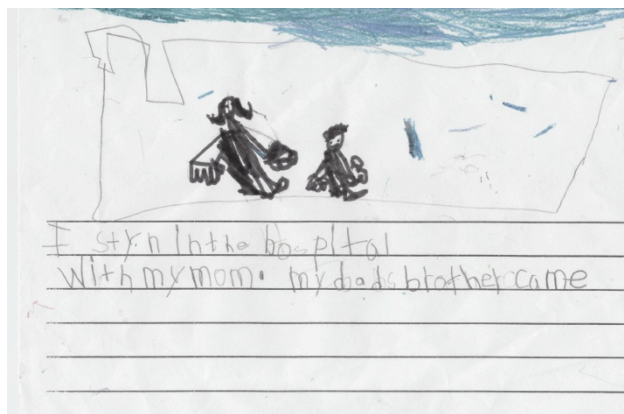




Figure 11. Page 1: I stay in the hospital with my mom. My dad brother came. Page 2: blank

In this piece of writing, Pablo is writing about an experience of going to the hospital(see Figure 5). Pablo shares few of the details about why he went to the hospital, but does write about the people that were there with him. His story reads, “I went to the hospital with my mom. My dad brother came.” Pablo added a second page to his story and he drew a picture of all of the people that came to see him at the hospital and no written words.. The following excerpt is a writing conference that Pablo had with Ms. Brown about his experience of going to the hospital.

Ms. Brown: Let’s see... This writer had an idea. You had an idea let’s check it out.

Pablo : My dad is right here and then my dad is right there

Ms. Brown: Okay.. so keep going. You just spoke it, so if you can speak it...

Pablo: You can write it and you can read it

Ms. Brown: okay, here we go...

Pablo: I spent the night at the hospital with my mom.

Ms. Brown: That's a complete thought so what do we do with complete thoughts?

Pablo: A period

Ms. Brown: And then you said "My dad's brother came"

Pablo: Right here

Ms. Brown: Uh-uh. So write dad (May 9, 2013)

The writing conference begins with Ms. Brown acknowledging that Pablo's idea about writing a story about when he went to the hospital is a great idea. Although the focus of the conference becomes about the mechanics of the story, the student's experience is the basis for the writing. Thus, students' experiences outside of school became a valuable resource that students could draw upon for their writing. Another example of an experience includes Pablo's story about meeting Neyda's brother at the park and playing with him. The exchange begins with Lina questioning whether or not Pablo really knows Neyda's brother.

Lina: No. It's me a star. I give you one for Hugo

Pablo: Hugo?

Lina: Yes. You don't know him. That's his brother

Maria: That's the brother of Neyda right?

Pablo: I've seen Hugo

Lina: She's nine? [she has confused the pronoun she for he]

Pablo: Yeah

Lina: When is his birthday at?

Pablo: I don't know, but...

Lina: He's number 9

Pablo: I already know who is him. I saw Neyda at the park.

Neyda: I play with him

Pablo: I saw him. He said my name.

Maria: And your name.. Pablo, Pablo, Pablo

Pablo: Pablo. He said it right. Like you. You said my name wrong. How you spell my name (May 9, 2013)

This story about seeing Neyda and her brother at the park provided a basis for many days' for Pablo's writing. . Conversations like this one about students' experiences outside of school were interweaved with discussions about writing. These stories a rich source that students were able to access as they discussed, drew, and wrote during the writing workshop time.

Students in this study were able to draw from a rich reservoir of cultural resources that permeated their writing. Students' experiences with popular culture, particularly

Monster High and Power Rangers, provided a common experience that members of the group could discuss and write and about. Songs also provided a way in which students in the group could establish membership within the group. Through the songs and the discussions of popular culture, students were able to navigate between the official and unofficial worlds of school. Students were also able to use their experiences with family as a rich cultural resource that they could draw from. Students used their experiences outside of school as topics to write about on an everyday basis. Popular culture, songs, and the experiences with family all provided students with a wealth of knowledge that they could use while writing.

Social Relationships

As students talked and wrote during the writing workshop time, the focal students adopted a collaborative stance towards one another. Ms. Brown created a classroom community where students were expected to help and support each other as writers. During the writing workshop time, Ms. Brown could be heard conferencing with individual students and engaging with students around them to get feedback on the writing. In doing this, Ms. Brown invited others to listen and participate in the writing conferences that she had with students every day. Students took on this role and helped and taught each other. Moreover, focal students displayed the complexity of their social relationships not just in helping each other, but in the way that they included and excluded each other from their stories. Students included or excluded others from their stories based on different factors. These exclusions and inclusion of friends in their story became an important part of the social work that students took on during the writing time.

Helping and Teaching Each Other

Students adopted a collaborative stance by helping each other during the writing workshop time. Throughout the conversations, students sought out help from their peers with a wide range of issues. During the independent writing time, students positioned each other as resources that they could draw upon for help. For example, focal students often called on Lina when they needed help. As previously stated, Lina was the highest achieving student in the focal group and her linguistic capital was much higher than other students because both of her parents were bilingual and were able to speak to her in both languages. Other students positioned her as a more knowledgeable student by calling on her to spell words for them as they wrote. Lina accepted this position and often took on the role of helping students in the group. Students took on the role of teaching each other and taught other students about mechanics, adding details, drawing, spelling, using resources, and ways of using language. Most of the teaching however focused on spelling. The following vignette exemplifies the type of teaching that students in the focal group did as they were writing. Neyda is writing as Lina tells her the letters to write.

Lina: “S”

Neyda: I already put an “s”

Lina: That’s it.

Neyda: And Rubi?

Lina: Okay... Where is Rubi? (Lina looks for Ruby on her paper)

R-u-b-i. Rubi. R-u-.... Haga la “b” asi [Make the “b” like this].

Neyda that’s a “v”. I said “b”

Lina: Neyda do a “b”

Lina: That’s not how to spell Rubi. It’s an “R”. I said “R”. I said “R” not “B”

Neyda: I already do an “R”

Juan: Rubi.... Rubi (April 25, 2013)

In this example, Lina takes on the teaching role as she helps Neyda to write words. She not only tells her what letters to write, but she also teaches Neyda about letter formation and gently corrects her when she writes the wrong letter. Thus, students participate in teaching and learning during the writing workshop time.

Students helped each other with their writing in different ways, include helping with using resources in the classroom, adding details to writing, helping with illustrations, and spelling. In the following example, Pablo seeks out Juan’s help as he draws the school. This interaction of Juan helping Pablo occurs in English.

Neyda: Are you laughing at mine?

Lina: No.

Pablo: Juan, how you write our school?

Juan: Our school? How to spell?

Pablo: No. how you write it? How you draw and write it? How you write it?

Neyda: Like this.

Pablo: I want to do like yours

Juan: This is bobcat

Pablo: You doing that?

Juan: Yes. This school has one of this is a bobcat. It's B-O-B

Pablo: No. I want to draw our school

Juan: (spells the name of the school)

Pablo: No. I just want to write it.

Juan: (spells it again)

Pablo: No, Juan. I want to draw it.

Juan: Oh.. just copy mine. Yeah? I could do it for you. Yeah?

Pablo: Okay (May 16, 2013)

In this example, Juan is seeking out Pablo's help with drawing the school. Juan seeks to get clarification in order to understand what kind of help Pablo with his writing. In the end, Pablo allows Juan to see how he drew the picture of the school so that he can also

draw the picture. Examples like this one illustrate how the focal students were willing to help each other with their writing.

Students in the focal group also took on the role of teaching each other during the writing time. In many instances, students appropriated the language that Ms. Brown used and also taught each other about illustrations and writing conventions. Students used this school discourse as they were teaching each other during the writing time. As she helped students with their writing, Lina tells another students to “say it slowly and think about it some more.” This is something that Lina had heard Ms. Brown say many times as she encouraged students to try to write words independently. In another instance, Pablo tells Neyda to “say it slow. Use your words.” In examples like this, students positioned themselves as teachers within the group. Lina, Neyda, and Pablo saw themselves as experts at different times and were able to teach others in the group who needed help.

Telling Each Other What to Do

Some of the students in the group also took on the role of telling each other what to do. Different students positioned themselves as experts and novices within the group and often told the others in the group topics to write about, people they could play with, and what they needed to do in their writing. In the following example Neyda tells the other students in the group not to play with Lina.

Maria: What happen?

Lina: I don't have to tell you because you were being mean to me... Stop, Neyda

Neyda: Stop!

Lina: I just right here.

Neyda: You just hurt your hand

Lina: She say that. Right... she say that. I did hurt my hand

Juan: She tell me nothing

Pablo: We need one more. Juan, you find one more?

Neyda: Don't play with Lina because she is so mad. (May 16, 2013)

As illustrated, Lina is mad at Neyda for laughing at her when she hurts her hand. When Neyda sees that Lina is upset with her, she tells the other students in the group not to play with Lina because she is mad. Neyda not only tells the students what to do, but she also gives them the reason why they should not play with her.

Focal students often had disagreements with each other and argued back and forth about different things. Juan becomes a mediator who steps in when others have disagreements. In the following example, Neyda and Lina are arguing over a Monster High pencil. Juan steps in as they are fighting and tells Neyda to leave Lina alone.

Neyda: My name Neyda. How are you going to be rude?

Pablo: Neyda, leave her alone.

Lina: You're mean Neyda

Pablo: Neyda, just leave her alone. Okay?

Lina: I'm telling

Pablo: Are you mad at me too? (May 13, 2013)

Within the group, Pablo also takes on this role of mediator by telling other students that they need to stop arguing or fighting. Arguments between Lina and Neyda were common and they were often fighting over things such as tools or who was writing about what character in Monster High. Within the group, these two girls constantly sought to place themselves in positions of power within the group. On another occasion, Juan once again steps in when Lina and Neyda are fighting and models for them what he would say to Ms. Brown if he were to tell.

Neyda: And Dracula she's scared and you not in her source

Lina: And you know her source too. I'm going to call you "source"

Juan: I'm going to say this to Ms. Brown, "Lina said to Neyda.. She say boo to her picture. That's not nice."

Pablo: Lina, Lina...

Neyda: Nah-uh, Mrs. Brown not scared

Lina: Who we learn from the dresses? I learn it for myself. Liar...liar

Neyda: Ms. Brown don't want to hear nothing about you

Juan: You need to be both friends because.. Because (May 13, 2013)

In this conversation, Juan practices what he would say to Ms. Brown by saying it out loud to Neyda and Lina. He mediates their conversation and tells Lina that she

is not being nice to Neyda. Lina once again asserts her power within the group when she tells the others that she learned to draw the dresses all by herself.

Exclusion and Inclusion: Who Can Be in My Story?

The emergent bilingual students participated in complicated relationships with each other. That is, at times students excluded and included other students in their stories and conversations depending on how they themselves were included or excluded. Students usually included or excluded each other and discussed it since they sat together everyday during the writing time. There were times when students excluded each other based on events that happened during different parts of the day. These decisions to include or exclude other students were made by individual students as they sought to assert themselves as important members of this community of writers. The building of these social relationships was crucial to the students' learning. These interactions were a vehicle for student learning, they "served not only as a context for learning, but also as a means for learning"(Rowe, 1994 p. 183). Student often included each other in their stories about their experienced and imaginary worlds. Students wrote stories about real events that happened at school or on the playground and they wrote stories about imaginary settings and characters in which other students were assigned new identities. In the following example, Neyda is writing a story that includes Lina. At first, Lina is resistant to the idea of her 16th birthday, but then she agrees and participates in the discussion of how she will be represented in the story.

Neyda: Ese era tu balloon [that was your balloon] and that was your 16th birthday.

Lina: Why? I'm not 16 yet.

Neyda: Who cares, you are 16.

Lina: No. I am 6.

Maria: Lina, you know what.. you can give me green. Haci es el color green [this is the color green]

Neyda: I'll pretend it was first

Lina to Neyda: You me to make you?

Neyda: Sure

Lina: I'll make a dress

Neyda: I do your hair

Lina: I'll do my stuff (May 9, 2013)

Students' stories were often connected by the way in which they included each other in the stories. For example, a student would include another student who had included them in yesterday's story. The following example shows how students made decisions to include other students in their written stories. In this excerpt, Neyda and Maria are pretending that they are going to McDonalds. As they create this imagined world, both students participate in what they think will be said when they visit McDonalds. Maria also makes a request to be represented in a certain way as Neyda includes her in her story.

Neyda: I do not share it. I'm going to write we go to McDonalds and then you said "ooh yummy pasta"

Maria: Mira vi una turtle y un fish. Aqui esta [Look, I saw a turtle and a fish. Here it is] Tienen agua [they have water]

Neyda: Maria said “I want more”, “I want more”

Maria: you’re going to draw me y tu que vas a decir [and what are you going to say?]

Neyda: I don’t want a sandwich.

Maria: This was me and this was you.

Neyda: Hey Maria, I draw you beautiful and me..

Maria: Who is her? Oh... Neyda and who is her? ...me. This is Brittany and this was you. Draw me like you.

Neyda: You want to be like me? La, la, la (singing)

Maria: I’m wearing purple! And red lipstick and a pink dress (May 13, 2013)

It is interesting to note that although Neyda had a extended conversation with Maria about how they went to McDonalds, she ended up changing the story. Maria was a part of the conversation about the text, but there is no mention of Maria in the actual story because Neyda decided to change who she included. The next day Neyda chose to include Lina in the story instead and therefore changed the entire story by adding a second sentence that included Lina’s name (see figure 12). Lina was the student in the class that students wanted to align themselves with and therefore students worked to establish positive relationships with her through their writing. In doing this, focal

students “were able to act in socially sophisticated ways” (Dyson, 1993, p. 76) and continually define and redefine relationships with others in the group.

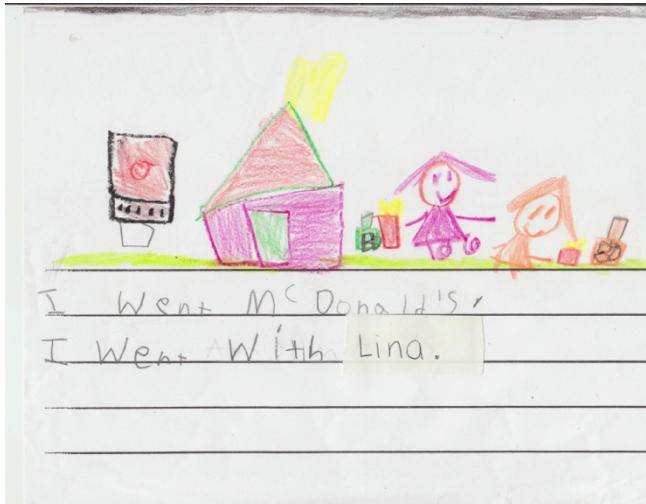


Figure 12. I went McDonalds. I went with Lina.

Students not only excluded each other in their stories, but the work during the writing time also carried to other parts of the day. If students got mad during the writing time, then there would be consequence during recess or lunch for students. The following example shows how exclusion during the writing time carried over to other parts of the day.

Lina: Let's draw Dracula ora ahorita[now]

Maria: And then let's do Lagoona's 16th birthday.

Lina: (singing) The happy birthday girl... the happy birthday girl...

Neyda: No Maria, you need to do your work

Lina: Yeah. If you don't do it, we are not going to play with you

Neyda: Vamos a jugar afuera [we are going to play outside]

Lina: We are going to make a party of Draculaura

Maria: Ah (May 7, 2013)

Maria tries to be a part of the conversation about Monster High. Neyda immediately stops Mari and tells her that she needs to do her work. Lina furthers the warning by telling Maria that she will be excluded from their playtime if she doesn't get back to work. Maria is not only excluded from the conversation about the writing, but she is also excluded from the pretend play that Lina and Neyda will have about Monster High during recess.

“Where is the Baby Blue?”

One of the ways in which focal students in this study negotiated social relationships with peers was through ownership and use of writing tools. During the writing workshop time, students in this classroom were able to choose from a wide range of tools to use. Students chose the type and size of paper that they needed depending on the genre of writing that they were working on. There was a designated area where the paper was stored and students were able to get up during the writing time to what the paper that they needed. Students also used a variety of writing tools such as markers, pencils, colored pencils, and crayons. These tools were made available in caddies by table and students chose their own tools.

The use and ownership of the writing tools became often-discussed topic among the focal students. In particular, students began to use the ownership of the baby blue crayons as having some sort of social power within the group. Thus, students used the crayons for the purpose that they were intended, but they also used them to negotiate relationships with each other and to position themselves as having power within the group. The following excerpt illustrates how students discussed ownership of the writing tools with each other.

Pablo: Hey Juan, stop getting blue from us.

Juan: This is ours

Maria: Uh-uh

Pablo: This is ours!

Juan: See. This is baby blue.

Maria: Give me our purple

Pablo: Juan, you already have it.

Juan: That's ours

Pablo: No. That's ours. That was ours.

Juan: Hey look! Two baby blues!

Pablo: You stole our blue. You stole ours. You have one baby blue now let me get the another one. Deal?

Juan: That was ours. Tell me which one is yours.

Pablo: You give it back.

Juan: Oh yeah

Pablo: Juan!

Maria: Juan, give it back

Pablo: Just stop dropping it. I'm going to play with the crayons really bad. You just need to stop playing with the crayons. Stop doing like this. You don't know how to hold a crayon right. (inaudible) I have more baby blues than you. We have 10 baby blues. (May 9, 2013)

In this vignette, Pablo, Maria, and Juan have an argument about the baby blue crayons. For the students in the group, it was important for them to have the most number of crayons of this color. Early on in my observations, I noticed that the baby blue carried a higher value as a writing tool within the group. Students used the baby blue crayons to broker relationships within the group and to position themselves as having more power than those who did not possess that color.

Emergent bilingual students used other material resources that were available to them in order to broker relationships with others. One of the materials that students considered as very personal and something that belonged to them was their writing folder. The writing folder served as a place where students stored their ongoing and finished writing pieces. It also stored their personal word walls, ABC charts, and other charts that their class had made together that could help them during the writing time.

Therefore, students valued their writing folder and considered it a very personal possession. The following example shows Lina protecting the space designated for her folder.

Lina: Neyda, don't put your papers in my folder. Tienes tu folder aqui tambien.
[You have your folder here too]

Neyda: Eque no lo puedo quitar. [It's because I can't take it away]

Lina: Pues quitalo para tras. Neyda, quitale el otro paper. Neyda, stop stepping on my paper. [Well take it back. Neyda, move back the other paper]

Neyda: Why you put it right there? (April 19, 2013)

This example not only shows how Lina understand that everyone in the class has their folder, but that other physical tools such as paper were also used to broker relationships. The following example shows how relationships were constructed and deconstructed based on the physical writing tools. In this excerpt, Maria is looking for a pencil and she thinks that Lina has the pencil that she is looking for. Neyda steps in and wants to check Lina's folder to see if she has Maria's pencil. Lina quickly opposes and that leads to conflict between Neyda and Lina.

Lina: These are the stuff I found. Now, crayons go here, pencils, and erasers

Maria: Lina, Lina do you have my pencil?

Lina: No. I don't have it.

Maria: I'm going to tell Ms. Brown

Lina: Okay, I can share mine.

Maria: Tell her

Lina: No, you.

Maria: I'm not

Lina: No esta en tu folder? [Is it in your folder]

Maria: Es que no estaba [It's because it was not there]

Neyda: Lina, donde esta tu folder [Lina, where is your folder?]

Lina: No. leave my folder alone, Neyda! Don't look at my folder. It's not your business to look in my folder. Would you like to do this to your folder? Then don't look at mine. It's not your business.

Neyda: Maria, no lo tengo [Maria, I don't have it}

Lina: I'm going to put it aya [there]

Neyda: Donde lo dejastes? [where did you leave it?] Lina got our crayons. Vente Maria [Come here Maria]. Te voy a ayudar Maria [I'm going to help you Maria]

Lina: Neyda, vete a colorear aya [Neyda, go color over there]

Neyda: Lo vamos a colorear aqui [We are going to color it here]

Lina: No puedes. No the dejan [You can't. They won't let you]

Neyda: It's because Maria lost her crayon

Lina: But this is writing, not drawing (May 8, 2013)

The writing tools in this classroom became physical tools that were used for negotiating peer relationships within the group. The baby blue became a reoccurring trend and students used their possession of this color to obtain a certain status within the group. Other tools, such as student writing folder, became a designated personal space for the students and they protected this space at the expense of creating conflict with others in the group. Thus, the social relationships were in a sense brokered in part by these physical materials that were available to the students.

Emergent bilingual students in this study exhibit the complexity of the social relationships that students take part in in classrooms. Students were able to draw upon the resources of having access to other students in order to the work in writing. Focal students were able to help and teach other during the composing process. The complexity of these social relationships was further demonstrated in the way that students included and excluded other students in their writing and during other activities. This complexity was further reiterated in the way that students used the physical writing tools to broker the social relationships with each other. The following section focuses on how the access to the different sources (linguistic, cultural, and social) led to students being positioned in a certain way.

Power and Agency

Throughout my observations in the classroom, the five focal students strived to create their own place within the classroom and other students. This group of students engaged in constant conversations throughout the day and their relationships were

dynamic. The students revealed their complex worlds as they shared stories about their home, popular media, and school. Students also created their own unofficial space within the official world of school and they constantly negotiated relationships with each other through the texts that they composed during the writing workshop time. Issues related to power and agency played out as students navigated social relationships during the writing workshop time. Although students learned in a highly supportive classroom, issues related to access and power were enacted everyday as students talked and wrote. Two of the five focal students will be detailed in this section. Maria and Lina were selected because they seemed to be positioned by others as having the highest and lowest status within the group.

Resources that lead to positioning

The resources that emergent bilingual students in this study had access to led students to be positioned in a certain ways. Students had access to different linguistic, cultural, and social resources that students brought to school. The school context placed different values on resources that students brought to school. For example, for some students the rich repertoire of resources that they brought to school was not valued and therefore they were positioned as weaker students within the group. An example of this is the value placed on the language that students spoke. In an English-only setting, more value was placed on linguistic resources in English. This value on certain resources led to positioning as experts for students like Lina, whose resources aligned with what was valued at school. It also led to the loss of power for students like Maria whose resources did not closely align with what was valued at school.

Emergent bilingual students had different competencies in speaking Spanish and English. Some of the students, like Neyda and Maria, began the year not speaking much English, but with a rich knowledge of Spanish. Other students, like Lina and Pablo, spoke both languages at home and they had more access to the oral aspects of language. For Lina, this translated into having access to a greater vocabulary in both languages, which then in turn helped her to write more complex stories.

Students also had varying degrees of cultural resources within the group. Students identified and discussed topics, such as *Monster High*, that carried more capital within the group. The knowledge of these cultural resources led to social membership within the group. As a result, students who knew about the popular culture topics or songs that were being discussed were allowed membership with the group. This led to positioning of students as experts and novices and in turn that led to the enactment or loss of power and agency.

Positioning of students was also due to the social relationships that were established within the group. Students took on the roles of helping and teaching each other, thus positioning students as someone who taught and others as someone who needed help. Students' complex relationships also led to the exclusion and inclusion of others in writing and in other activities. These exclusions show how students used the writing time to accomplish the work of writing, but also to accomplish the goal of constructing and deconstructing relationships with each other. The tools that were available to students also played a role in the social relationships and they were used to broker relationships among the students.

Lina and Maria are profiled in the following section to exemplify how this group of young emergent bilingual students enacted or lost power and agency due to the access or opportunity to use their cultural, social, and linguistic resources.

Lina: The one with power and agency

Like the other focal students, Lina interacted with others during the writing workshop time. For Lina, the writing time was a time that she could exert the power that was afforded to her. In many ways, Lina was the focal student with the most resources that are most valued in the school setting.. Lina came from a family that provided many experiences outside of the home. Lina’s family traveled and took day trips to nearby towns. Lina was also the only student in the group whose parents attended college and spoke English. At home, Lina’s parents spoke both languages to her. When she entered Pre-K, Lina was already fluent in both languages. This allowed Lina to excel quickly in her classes because she could understand the content that was being taught. This also gave Lina other advantages because her parents were able to help her at home with concepts that she was learning at school. This provided Lina with the most social, cultural, and linguistic resources that were valued in the official world of school. Lina’s repertoire of language resources was evident in the stories that she wrote. Of all the focal students, Lina was the most prolific writer and was able to draw upon a larger collection of words for her writing. Lina was able to take more risks in her writing and write words that are not common on kindergarten reading lists. For example, she wrote approximations of words such as “Chrangouna” for Chattanooga and other places that she visited. Other approximations included words like “brday” for birthday and “favorat” for favorite. Students in the group knew that Lina had access to resources that allowed her to

write more sophisticated words and they wanted to be around her and have her approval because they were aware that this afforded her more power within the classroom and the group. Lina was able to write words to attempt words that other kindergarten students did not attempt and she has a wealth of experiences with her family that she was able to write about. Lina was positioned as an expert writer by the teacher, therefore students wanted her help with their own writing. She was often called upon to assist her peers with writing and to share her writing with the class. The other students were attuned to these linguistic resources and wanted to align themselves with Lina. Part of this was due to Lina's language skills and the way that they closely approximated with that of the classroom teacher and school than any of the other students in the group. Lina had knowledge of the language of "how to do school" and she often used that knowledge to tell others what to do. This positioned Lina in a powerful role within the group and gave her a sense of agency that was not as evident with other members of the group.

Lina was in control of her own writing because her writing more closely aligned with what was expected in the group. Lina was able to more closely represent her stories through writing because her rich linguistic repertoire in English. Due to her higher language resources in English, Lina was afforded more power within the group of students. This power that is afforded to Lina is in part due to the value that is placed on speaking English in this classroom. English is the language of instruction, learning, and interaction with the teacher. Consequently, students who have more access to English, like Lina, have more power within the group. This power that is afforded to Lina is generated through the interactions that she has with the students and with Ms. Brown. Students also often sought out Lina's approval in the group. In the following excerpt,

Juan is telling Neyda that she cannot tell on Maria because Maria was the bobcat of the week. The student who was selected as the bobcat of the week was a student who had exemplified good behavior the past week. In this episode, Juan wants Lina's confirmation about what he believes should happen.

Neyda: We're telling on you Maria

Juan: You can't tell on the bobcat. You can't tell on the bobcat.

Maria: What's bobcat?

Juan: That's you. You're the bobcat.

Maria: Ohh

Neyda: Yes, you can tell on the bobcat

Juan: No. Right Lina, you can't tell on the bobcat?

Lina: Uh-uh (yes)

Juan: Well when I was the bobcat somebody told on me, but he didn't tell (April 26, 2013)

Although Lina was not interested in this particular conversation about Maria telling on Neyda, it is important to note that students look to Lina to make decision about things that they can or cannot do in the classroom. In this case, Juan seeks her confirmation about something because he knows that Lina holds power within the group and other students typically consider what she says as being important. Students in the group want to align themselves with Lina due to the position of power that she is afforded due to her

wealth of resources. The following example demonstrates how other focal students consider Lina as an authority figure in the discussion of different topics. Juan brings up the boogiemán and whether or not he really exists.

Pablo: He smells like terrible

Juan: He's not real right?

Maria: He can take a people. He can tear up his body and if he tear his body, he will be more scary.

Juan: He's not real right?

Lina: Only on the tv he is real

Pablo: He's really scary. He can't hurt anybody. He can't murder

Juan: Yeah can turn bad into monsters I think

Pablo: Right Lina he killed somebody

Lina: Uh-uh

Juan: He can turn monsters right?

Lina: No. He can't turn monsters

Juan: No. He can turn people. What they do.

Pablo: He's scary because he catch anybody whose bad

Juan: He's a monster right?

Pablo: He catch anybody who is bad (May 1, 2013)

Not only do students in her peer group afford Lina agency and power, the teacher also positions Lina as knowledgeable and values her as an experienced writer in the class.

Lina is one of the students in the class who gets to share her thinking during whole group instruction. Ms Brown often calls on Lina to share her writing and uses this time to show students what is considered exemplary writing. The following example is one of the times when Lina had an opportunity for her writing to be shared with other. Lina had added many details to her story and then had the opportunity to share this new thinking with others.

Lina: Ms. Brown, what is this?

Ms. Brown: I like that. I love the details. What I want you to maybe think about this time is that this is just telling me almost what you did every single day. Like you just tell it to me in order and as a .. as a... hang one second

Ms. Brown : This table right here stop for one second and I want to talk about Lina's story because ..

Ms. Brown: So this is Lina's story about going to Calhoun. Are you listening to her story and she says... when I went to Calhoun, my mom buy a ... purse. My mom buy a dress for me, but it was too long. That's a great detail. It was too long. Then, I went to Toys'R Us. Then I went to Sketchers and I got a sketchers. Then we left. We went home. Okay that's her story. What is.. What kind of questions do you have for Lina about her story that you might like to know more about her story. (April 25, 2013)

Moments such as these reinforce for students in the class that Lina is one of the most proficient writers among them.

Lina's agency was also evident in that she thought that she could tell the other students what they could write about. Emergent bilingual students in this study wrote and discussed a wide range of topics. Children drew upon their lived experiences at home and in school, along with knowledge of media resources to craft their compositions. These experiences became topics of conversation and written stories. One of the most prevalent topics was related to family and experiences at home, but popular culture also permeated the discussions and students' writing. Other topics such as gender and religions were also prevalent in their talk and writing. It is interesting to note that students in the focal group understood that the writing time was a time that they could write about things that they chose. In the following exchange Lina asks the other students to guess what she is writing about. Students immediately reply to her and begin to guess what her topic is.

Lina: Guess what I'm writing about...

Pablo: All about you?

Lina: Nope

Pablo: Or all about

Maria: Chuck-E-Cheeses

Lina: Nope

Maria: All about Peanut butter

Lina: Nope... he got it right. I write about Friday.

Pablo: Deven, do you want a baby blue

Maria: But we are not writing that Lina.

Lina: We writers so I can write about something else

Maria: Okay

Juan: We can write about everything we want

Pablo: This one is light blue

Maria: But you are not the boss of me. Lina, I say you can get this paper. (May 16, 2013)

While Lina understands that she can choose a topic to write about, she verbalizes on different occasions that other students have to write about topics that she believes are appropriate for them. In this class, Ms. Brown's focus is for students to write about stories from their own lives. Many of the mini-lessons focus on how students can write about these experiences. During one of the mini-lessons, Ms. Brown reminds the students about this, "Every day can be a story. Everyone has different experiences, so your stories are different" (Field Notes, April 30, 2013). Although students often wrote about stories that were "made up", the teacher encouraged real stories about events that had actually happened in the students' lives. Even though this was encouraged, students often wrote about topics related to popular culture that were interweaved with stories that included the focal students or other students in the class. In the following excerpt, Lina tells Neyda that she cannot write about Monster High.

Neyda: I'm gonna write about Monster High and I'm going to draw Draculaura's 16th birthday.

Lina: You can't Neyda. You can write about Monster High. You can tell your story where you went

Neyda: I already finished with one

Lina: From where you went somewhere like... when you went to the playground or a book, but you can't write Monster High.

Neyda: Yes, I can

Lina: You can't, Neyda

Neyda: We cannot write about how a boy and a grandpa was driving in the bus when I was a girl.

Lina: You can write about that. (April 26, 2013)

Lina lets Neyda know that the topic that she has chosen to write about is not as valued, although she has chosen to write many stories about Monster High herself (see Figure 8). She tells Neyda that she should write about a time when she went somewhere or a book that she has read. The two students have a disagreement about what should be considered "real" writing and Lina insists that Neyda cannot write about Monster High. This example is not just about choosing a topic, but more about the power that Lina in the group of students and how she believes that she some authority within the group to tell other students what they can or cannot write about. In another example, Lina also tells Juan that he should change his writing topic.

Juan: I'm going to write about Power Rangers

Lina: Hey, what about this. Write about we went to the circus with your brothers.

(April 22, 2013)

Within the group of focal students, Lina takes on an authoritative role and appropriates some of the teacher's language as she tries to tell students what they can or cannot write about. Another example includes Lina telling Neyda "You need to write their names so they can know who is them." (Field Notes, April 19, 2013) Lina is telling Neyda that she needs to label the people in the picture so that the reader will know who the person is. This is language that Ms. Brown often uses as she asks the students about their stories and the people represented in their drawings.

Another example of the agency and power that was afforded to Lina was evident in how other focal student in the group called upon her to help them with their writing. Students in the group were aware that Lina had stronger language skills that positioned her as knowing more within the group. This gave Lina even more within the group because she could choose when to help other students with their writing. In the following example, Neyda is asking Lina to help her write a word that she doesn't know how to spell.

Neyda: Lina, how do you spell "and"

Lina: You spell it "and" or "an"

Neyda: How you spell "I went". Lina, how you spell "I went"

Lina: You spell it. I'm busy. (April 22, 2013)

Students requesting help from Lina further positions her as an authority within the group. In this example, she chooses not to help Neyda with her writing. By telling her that she is too busy with her own writing to help, Lina positions herself as being a student whose work is more important.

Lina's agency was also evident in that she did not think that she needed to ask for help from her peers. Although her peers often asked for help from Lina, she only asked for help from teachers. Lina produced text in abundance and did this without any assistance from other students. However, Lina's teachers often conferred with her as she wrote her stories. Therefore, Lina was able to draw upon her multiple resources and get assistance from teachers as she wrote. The power that is afforded to her is generated through having more linguistic resources in English and more opportunities for interaction with teachers. The following excerpt illustrates how other students recognize that Lina asserts more power within the group

Lina: Neyda, yellow and green

Neyda: Not mine. I don't have one.

Lina: Yes, you do. Where's your green paper?

Neyda: Let me find mine

Lina: I have it. It's in the end. Duh! Now let's work people!

Maria: You're not the boss of us and you're not the boss of me either

Neyda: Good

Lina: How? You're going to mess up

Maria: You need to draw your name on it

Juan: I am

Maria: This is your table

Juan: It was this one, but not anymore. It's this one.

Pablo: Neyda, you don't sit here. You sit here.

Juan: It's because everyone is doing their job

Pablo: Tu no sabes [you don't know]

Juan: Neyda, she's not doing a great job

Neyda: And you not doing a good job and I'm going to write Maria

Lina: Mad at her friends

Maria: My what?

Neyda: Your birthday. No que tu quieras comprar unos tacones. Okay? [that you wanted to buy some high heels. Okay?]

Lina: Neyda, cuida tu cosa aya [take care of your thing there]. This is my space and you have yours. (April 30, 2013)

In this exchange, Lina tries to tell the group what to do, but Maria lets her know that she is not the boss of the group. Within the group, Lina takes on the role of controlling the

materials and telling others in the group what they should do. By telling the other kids to “get to work”, she positions herself as the boss, a position that Maria rejects. This bossiness is often displayed as Lina tries to control the work that students are doing and the material that the group has available to use. Lina also responds to Maria and tells her that she is going to mess up. This statement is an admonition to Maria for not allowing her to assert the position of someone who is in control. Lina also asserts her control within the group by claiming her space and telling Neyda to stay out of that space. In this excerpt, Neyda is also excluding Juan from the story after telling her that she is not doing a good job. After the two boys in the group, Pablo and Juan, let her know that she is the one that is not doing her job Neyda proceeds to tell them that she will write about Maria because he is the one that is not doing a good job.

Maria: the least capable writer

Maria was the student in the group with the least access to the official English curriculum in this classroom. This was due to the fact that Maria was one of the students in the class who was the least proficient in English. Maria’s mother had moved to the US to be with her stepfather only a few years before. Neither of her parents was proficient in English and both had very little formal education. Consequently, her language abilities positioned her as a student in within the group who knew less English and who was the least capable writer.

Not only did others position Maria herself as less capable, but she positioned herself this way as well, often speaking of things that she could not do while she was writing. The following excerpts illustrate how Maria verbalized not being able to do things that the other students could do.

Maria: And... I cannot use my sounds

Juan: You need to say it slowly.. meet (April 26, 2013)

Maria: How you spell it?

Juan: It's on the word wall I say

Maria: I don't know how to spell it "the"

Juan: It's a kindergarten word T-H-E (May 6, 2013)

These two episodes are examples of how Maria articulated that she was not able to do what some of the other students in the group were able to do during the writing time. In articulating this, Maria positions herself as a student who does not know how to do the work of a writer. In the May 6th episode, Juan reminds Maria that the word is what is known in the class as a "kindergarten word". These are the words that kindergarteners in the class must learn to read and write. The teacher refers to them as kindergarten words to reinforce their importance that students know how to read and write the words. By reminding Maria that this is one of those words, Juan is also letting Maria know that she should know this word because it's part of words that all kindergarten students in the class have to know.

Students in the class also dismissed Maria and often positioned her in a weaker position by the things that they said to her. The following excerpt illustrates how Neyda questions Maria's topic of writing.

Juan: Maria...

Neyda: What are you writing about?

Lina: Do I have to tell you? No! Leave me alone or I'll write on your finger.

Maria: Monster High

Neyda: Why you write that? (May 20, 2013)

This example shows how Maria's voice is less heard than the other students in the group. When Maria attempts to answer a question that had been asked for Lina, the other students quickly dismiss and question her writing about Monster High. This excerpt once again illustrates the dichotomy in the difference in power between Lina and Maria. In this discussion, Lina claims the position of not needing to share her story with others. In this additional example, Maria is once again dismissed as she tries to enter conversations about the writing.

Maria: Who made that? It's so pretty. Esta feo [it's ugly] Whose that dress? Who is that one? You?

Lina: Yes

Maria: Oh, you look pretty. That is your. Lina... where is I? I... I... Neyda... School... I wish I could have that color.

Lina: Shh!

Maria: And paint your dress (April 26, 2013)

Once again, Lina assumed an authoritarian role and replies to Maria's question by only saying yes. This is important because students were always having discussions about their writing with each other. By telling Maria that she needs to be quiet, Lina is in a sense telling her that she cannot participate in conversations about writing, therefore positioning her outside their group of people who talk about writing. In the following vignette, Lina is discussing her story with the other students in the group. Neyda brings up a song that is in Spanish. Neyda begins to sing the song. Maria interjects and tells Lina and Neyda that she knows the songs. This is a way in which Maria is trying to gain credibility. Lina immediately shuts her down and accepts Neyda's version of the song.

Lina: Okay, I draw me. Over here with you (talking to Neyda).

Neyda: You were like "oohh, let's rock this party"

Lina: I'm going to draw my hand up at the sky

Neyda: And then the music "boom, boom, boom, boom yo quiero estar contigo"

Maria: Oh, I know that song

Lina: I know it first

Neyda: Yo la cante [I sang it]

Neyda: Boom, boom, boom, yo quiero estar contigo

Lina: I know that song

Neyda: Okay, we are going to sing the song and it's going to be beautiful okay?

It's Monster High. We're going to practice it okay guys?

Lina: I can't

Neyda: Lina, you need...

Lina: I want to do my own show

Neyda: Lina, we are going to practice it in the car

Lina: No

Neyda: Maria, mira. Haci es como canta la musica de Monster High [This is how you sing the music from Monster High]. Lina show her how it's done. (May 13, 2013)

One of the other ways that students in the group positioned Maria as different was by making fun of the way that she talked. On several occasions the focal students had discussions about things that she said or ways that she spoke. The following excerpts are examples of how Maria was positioned as someone that students could make fun of within the group.

Lina: Maria is kind of crazy (May 8, 2013)

Lina: Maria, you have the marker. Why you're crazy? I'm just thinking... porque te ries asi?(Why do you laugh like that?) ha ha ha asina (like that) Why you laugh like that? (April 19, 2013)

Lina: Stop. Stop. Can I borrow your crayons?

Maria: [laughing] That's not your pencil.

Lina: She's crazy. Esta loca Maria. See. Just kidding. (April 19, 2013)

Lina: Maria, hablas como loca. Porque hablas asina?

[Maria, you talk like you're crazy. Why do you talk that way?]

Neyda: Porque Diosito le mando su voice asi verdad que si?

[because God sent her voice like that. Right?]

Maria: Si (April 20, 2013)

All of these excerpts illustrate how Lina positioned Maria as someone who was crazy and who laughed and talked in ways that were funny. This places Maria in a role of being someone that other students think that they can make fun of. In one instance, Neyda does stand up to Lina and tells her that Maria laughs like because God gave her that voice. Others' discussions about her make Maria vulnerable and position her as a student that needs protection.

Although students often dismissed what Maria had to say and sometimes they did not include her in conversations, they were also mindful of the fact that Maria needed more support within the group. Students in the focal group were aware of the issue of access that Maria had in learning to speak and write in a new language. Focal students recognized that Maria needed more support in her native language and helped her do the

work in writing by speaking to her in Spanish. The following example illustrates how other students were able to offer support by speaking Spanish to Maria.

Neyda: mi mami raya asi. Asi mira. Las mamas rayan despasito [my mommy writes like this. Look like this. The mommies write very slowly]

Maria: You're going to be messed up y si las mamas messed up eso no importa porque ellas son mamas [and if the moms mess up, it doesn't matter because they are moms] (April 26, 2013)

In this episode, Neyda is showing Maria how she can write words very slowly the way her mom has shown her. She is modeling for Maria and showing her how she can write. Focal students in the group recognize that Maria needed additional assistance with her writing and stepped in to help her.

Emergent bilingual students in this study created an official space within the classroom in which complex social relationships played out. Students negotiated relationships and power and agency were enacted as students sought to establish themselves within the group. For Lina, the resources that she had access to allowed her to have more power within the group and enact a sense of agency that allowed her to position herself and others within the group. For Maria, the resources that she brought to school were not resources that were as valued. Thus, the led to her positioning as a weaker writer and someone who needed help from others.

Conclusion

The young emergent bilingual students that were a part of this study participated in different ways during the writing workshop. Issues of power and agency were enacted every day during the writing time. Students took on different roles that shifted constantly between teacher and learner. Focal students also drew from an array of resources as they wrote. Students depended on each other as they used other members of the group as a resource. Characters from popular media provided a rich resource that students drew upon to write many stories. Students embodied the television characters and created an imagined world that included them as a part of the story. Students also drew upon their rich linguistic resources. Students used Spanish and a mix of Spanish and English as they composed. The use of Spanish and code switching helped students to make and sense of their lived bilingual experiences. Overall, the emergent bilingual students in this study engaged in the composing process as they drew upon rich cultural, social, and linguistic resources. Along with the other students, student created a complex social space in which writing was more than writing words on a page.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

"An authentically caring pedagogy would not only cease subtracting students' cultural identities, it would also reverse its effects. It would build bridges wherever there are divisions and it would privilege biculturalism out of respect for the cultural integrity of their students."

- Angela Valenzuela, 2006, p. 266

The purpose of this qualitative investigation was to how examine emergent bilingual students participate in writing events. The study focused on kindergarten students during their writing workshop. An additional purpose was to explore the social, cultural, and linguistic resources that emergent bilingual drew upon when they were engaged in the composing process. The questions guiding my study were: (1) How do emergent bilingual writers participate in writing events? (2) What social, cultural, and linguistic resources do emergent bilingual writers draw upon when engaged in the composing process? and (3) What impact do these resources have on young emergent bilingual writers' understandings of the writing process? This study examined the social relations that children have as they interact with other students during the writing time. In the classroom where the study took place, the writing time was a time when interactions between students were discussed or and different social roles were enacted.

Findings from this study revealed that emergent bilingual students use language in sophisticated ways. Students appropriated teacher talk to "do school." Students also used their varying proficiencies in both languages in order to navigate social relationships, have writing discussions, and to include others. They drew from a rich repertoire of

cultural resources that include popular culture and family experiences. Complex social relationships in which issues of power and agency play out as students position themselves and others within the group based on access to resources were also evident in this study. Several theories informed my study. Theories that guided my study include sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), critical race theory (Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2001) and ethic of care (Noddings, 1984).

In this chapter, I summarize this study and discuss the claims and findings that were presented in chapter five. I then present the implications that this study has for teachers and other stakeholders. I will then discuss the limitations of the study. Finally, I make recommendations for further research that explores issues related to emergent bilingual students.

Power of Language

The young emergent bilingual students in this study demonstrated the potential for using language in sophisticated ways. Students had limited opportunities to use their native language for instructional purposes, but they used their knowledge of Spanish to accomplish other social work within the group. Therefore, the data supports the notion that students understood that English was more privileged in this context.

The use of Spanish was used during the writing time to discuss what they were writing although the actual composing was done in English. For Maria, this unofficial use of language was a scaffold as she attempted to do the work in a language in which she was not proficient. One particular example of this is when Maria was writing a story about how she had gotten a new dog. Maria tells an elaborate story in Spanish and

English and the other students interact with her as she is telling the story. The final product is one sentence in English, but her oral story is rich and filled with details. Maria is able to share her story orally with other students, but this is not as highly valued as the finished written story. Students also used their different levels of knowledge of both languages in order to include peers in the conversations. For example, in one particular instance, Neyda and Maria were having a conversation about Monster High. Maria begins to recall a conversation that she had with her mother about wanting to watch the show. When Maria describes the conversation with her mother, she switches to speaking Spanish because that is the language spoken at home. Codeswitching was often used when students were having conversations about popular culture topics. For example, one day the students are having a conversation about a song in Spanish that most of the students in the group know. Students begin to sing the song and talk about it in both languages. Neyda talks to Maria who does not know the song in Spanish and switches to English when she talks to Lina, “Maria, mira. Haci es como canta la musica de Monster High [This is how you sing the music from Monster High]. Lina, show her how it’s done!” This interaction between students shows how students used both languages to discuss a popular culture topic as well as to include everyone in the group in the conversation.

The findings from this study regarding knowledge and use of language by emergent bilingual students are congruent with the findings from Reyes (2006) and Gort (2006) among other scholars. Although both of these studies took place in bilingual contexts, the findings speak to the possibilities of sophisticated use of multiple languages by very young students. Reyes (2006) study that examined preschoolers’ patterns of

language and literacy in Spanish and English in a bilingual classroom. Reyes concluded that from a young age, emergent bilingual students try to make sense of their knowledge of two languages and make use of tools from both languages. In a similar fashion, this study expands on that notion by showing how young students are able to use language in sophisticated ways. Previous studies also have prompted us to consider the affordances of bilingualism (Gort, 2012; Gutiérrez, Baquedan-López, & Alvarez, 2001; Moll, 1990; Váldez, 1996). Gort's (2006) findings from a study of first grade emergent bilingual students in a dual-language classroom are also congruent with this study. Gort's (2006) findings indicate that young bilingual students were able to access and use either language when writing. The current study, which took place in an English-only context, shows how students were able to use both languages for social purposes, but had varying degrees of access when it came to discussions about writing. This study is unique in that students in this classroom were all bilingual with the exception of one student and the teachers. Students had limited access to their native language. The findings from this study speak to the potential for learning that could happen if students' native language were used in classrooms as a support for literacy learning.

From the present findings, I draw on sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978) to examine the language and literacy learning of these young emergent bilingual students. From this perspective, the interactions that students had with their peers and teachers as they participated in the writing workshop play a central role in their writing development. In this study, conversations that students had with their bilingual peers in Spanish scaffolded students' writing in English. Thus, students' writing cannot be studied separate from their talk. Students told rich narratives in both languages, but

many times their writing included simple sentences. Therefore, those rich experiences would be lost without close examination of the richness of the oral exchanges that students had with each other. From the sociocultural perspective, literacy is also seen as a meaning-making process that does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, literacy learning is embedded in the social contexts of the classroom, school, home, and community. I also draw on Latino critical race theory to examine the impact that instructing bilingual students in English-only settings can have on students' literacy learning. One interesting aspect of this study was that being bilingual was the norm in the classroom, but yet students understood that instruction and learning happened in English. In this study, the classroom context was restrictive regarding the use of multiple languages. English was used as the sole language of instruction due to the state-mandated English-only policy. Dyson (1993) notes that language is situated within a larger language world and that each language world comes with "its own social beliefs and language values" (p. 13). For emergent bilingual students, these worlds are very complex. At home, almost all the focal students were expected to speak Spanish to parents who only spoke one language. At school, the context becomes even more complex because although most other students were bilingual, the dominant language was English and there was an expectation that students would write and speak in English.

The Matthew Effect: From Maria to Lina

Differences in the way that students were positioned were due to the opportunities to access resources that students brought to school. These opportunities were based on the value that the schooling institution ascribed to the different linguistic, cultural, and social

resources. Maria and Lina exemplify how two students in one class can have different literacy trajectories based on how they are positioned by schooling, teachers, and peers.

One of the models that has attempted to identify reasons for individual difference in students' literacy development is the model known as the "Matthew Effect" (Stanovich, 1986). This model focuses specifically on reading development of individuals. The premise is that the rich get richer as indicated by reading volume and vocabulary growth. Therefore "the very children who are reading well and who have good vocabularies will read more, learn more word meanings, and hence read even better" (p. 375).

According to the Matthew Effect model, the rich get richer. In the case of this study, the student who had the most resources that were valued at school was Lina. The student with the least access to these privileged resources was Maria. Lina was able to see herself and was seen by others, including the teacher, as an expert writer. This provided Lina with multiple opportunities to share her writing with others, therefore expanding her ability to use "school talk" with others. Lina also had many opportunities to interact with the teacher through writing conferences. Of all of the focal students, Lina had the most writing conferences with the teachers. This was partly due to the way in which she was positioned as the expert writer in the class. Her writing was often used as exemplary writing and shared with others during the writing time. Lina was also often encouraged to take risks in her writing and even encouraged by Ms. Brown to use her knowledge of Spanish to write words in both language.

Maria did not have the same experiences in the classroom. Maria's proficiencies in English was one of the lowest in the class. Although Maria used English for social purposes, the academic work was difficult for her. This led to writing conferences with the teacher that focused mainly on mechanical errors rather than ideas. The opportunities provided for Maria to share her writing were also limited. In fact, I only saw Maria sharing her writing one or two times during the year. This lack of opportunities prevented Maria from developing the competencies that Lina was able to develop. Therefore, this lack of opportunities to expand language and writing could be one of the reasons why Maria did develop her writing.

Using Latino critical race theory (Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2001) allowed me to explore the opportunities and challenges unique to this group of students and to particularly think about students like Maria. This theory recognizes that the knowledge and experiences that are possessed by those who may be marginalized are real and legitimate. Although the resources that Maria brought to school were not deemed as valuable, they play an important role in learning and should be used in the curriculum. Findings that students consistently drew upon a wealth of resources counter the grand narrative that often views children who are Latino and learning a second language from a deficit perspective (Garcia, 2009). Instead, consistent with the tenets of Latino critical race theory, findings from this study indicate that young emergent bilingual students are holders and creators of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Early Identity Formation

Drawing on a sociocultural perspective, identities are dynamic, constantly shifting, and are shaped by the context and power relations within that context (Toohey, 2000). In this study, emergent bilingual students were positioned in different ways and the way in which they were positioned impacted how students saw themselves and also how others saw them. Hawkins (2005) describes identity formation as “an ongoing negotiation between the individual and social context or environment, with particular attention paid to operant cultural and power relations” (p. 61). The identities that students took on and the way that they were positioned were partly based on the opportunities that students had to access the linguistic, cultural, and social resources that were valued in the school setting. The access to these resources provided different opportunities for students and thus positioned some students as novices and others as experts within the group. These identities were played out in the way that students interacted with each other and as students took on issues of power and agency.

Issues of power and agency were prevalent as the emergent bilingual students in the class participated in writing events. Students were able to position themselves and others as a certain kind of writer or learner. Within the group, Lina was the student who had access to more linguistic experiences and therefore was able to position herself as a student with more authority within the group. Lina positions herself as an authority figure within the group by taking on the role of telling others what to do or what to write about. For example, during a conversation about writing topics, Lina tells Neyda that she has to change her writing topic from *Monster High* to writing about everyday experiences like going to the store. Although Lina’s writing topic often includes stories about *Monster*

High, she sees herself as having the authority to tell others what they can write about.

Maria was the student in the group who was positioned within the as less powerful. Maria was also the student who had the least experience with the English language. On several occasions, Maria accepts the role of being a student who is a less experienced writer and verbalizes this by stating that she does not know her sounds or that she does not know how to do something. Maria's lesser proficiency in speaking and writing in English positioned her in a role of someone who was a novice writer and thus needed the help of others. Maria's limited access to English made her a more vulnerable learner within the group. In some instances, Maria was even silenced or ignored by others.

In this study, students' identities were tied to the wealth of resources that they brought from home that were valued in the school setting. This is particularly important for populations, such as Latino students, who continue to be marginalized in school settings due to the perceived lack of resources that students bring to classrooms (Reyes & Halcón, 2001). These deficit views are "grounded on narrow definitions of literacy that privilege middle-class speakers of standard English and render useless the rich cultural and linguistic resources of non-mainstream children" (Reyes & Halcón, 2001, p. 4). In sense, ideologies about what is valued in education filter into classrooms and influence the identity formation of very young students. The finding from this study that young students are able to position themselves or enact a sense of agency are congruent with other studies that have examined identity development of young emergent bilinguals (Day, 2002; McCarthey, 2002, Toohey, 2001). Similar to these studies, the present study finds that very young students begin to form identities as writers and overall learners.

Implications

This study contributes to a new understanding of how young emergent bilingual students navigate in an English only classroom during the writing time. The literature that has focused on emergent bilinguals' writing development has been conducted in bilingual classrooms. Thus, this research provides new understandings of the resources that these young emergent bilingual students draw upon when writing. I have separated this part into two sections. The first section includes implications for practice based on the findings from this study. These implications are relevant for classroom teachers or other educators working with emergent bilingual students. The second section offers implications for policy. This section considers the research mentioned in Chapter 2 regarding the education of emergent bilingual students, as well as findings from this study.

Implications for Practice

The first implication for practice supported by findings from this study is that students' home language is an important resource that students can draw upon for learning. Teachers should adopt an additive approach to language that expands children's linguistic, social, and cultural resources while supporting learning a new language as well and literacy development (Moll & Dworin, 1996; Moll et al., 2001; Reyes, 2001). Teachers can respect and acknowledge students' home language and allow that language to be used even in an "English only" official curriculum (Soltero-Gonzalez & Reyes, 2012). Students' use of hybrid language practices (Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Tejada, 1999) such as code switching are important in supporting students as they navigate and use two languages. One way that teachers can support students is to

allow students to have conversations in their native language as they are learning. In the classroom, Maria was able to tell an elaborate story mostly in Spanish, but wrote a simple sentence about it. Teachers can position vulnerable writers like Maria as experts by valuing her oral story as much as her written story. Another suggestion is to create an interaction rich environment where talk is valued and encouraged. Teacher could partner students who are learning a new language with peers who may be able to help. As evidenced in this study, students were able to teach and help each other as they were writing and they often used both languages to achieve this task.

In working with emergent bilingual students, teachers also should implement a curriculum that affirms students' identities as well as engaging students in collaborative critical inquiry. Cummins (2000) defines this transformative/intercultural pedagogy as "interactions between educators and students that attempt to foster collaborative relations of power in the classroom" (p. 253). Such pedagogy acknowledges students' knowledge as valuable and builds on the cultural, social, and linguist resources that students bring to the classroom. In her study of Latino students' experiences in a high school, Valenzuela (1999) argues that schools fail to acknowledge the social and cultural resources that Latino students bring with them to school. Valenzuela notes that "rather than building on students' cultural and linguistic knowledge and heritage to create biculturally and bilingually competent youth, schools subtract these identifications from them to their social and academic detriment"(p. 25). Therefore, teachers must make efforts to recognize, affirm, and extend students cultural and social resources. This can be done by also recognizing that every student and family brings different funds of knowledge into the classroom.

Educators must also be attuned to the unofficial work that takes place among students during the school day. Students in this study show how students are positioned in certain ways, how social relationships are negotiated, and why teachers should pay attention to the unofficial worlds of students. The complex interactions that students have with each other reveal the multi-faceted nature of learning to write. These interactions cannot be separated and directly impact the official learning in the classroom.

The growing number of students who are emergent bilinguals should be an impetus for preparing teachers to meet the needs of these students. Lucas and Grinberg (2008) argue that teacher preparation programs need to provide teachers with specialized preparation and linguistic knowledge in order to provide effective instruction to emergent bilingual students in mainstream classrooms. Preservice and practicing teachers must be given opportunities to examine and evaluate their own beliefs about working with bilingual students. Teacher preparation must also include opportunities to explore and enact culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995).

Implications for Policy

Classrooms become sites for the implementation of policies. Federal and local policies have a direct impact on teachers and students and teachers have to negotiate multiple demands of curriculum and time. This study was conducted amidst a political context that calls for more standardization and English-only instruction. Due to restrictive language policies, teacher's pedagogical choices are restricted. Although Ms. Brown allowed the use of Spanish in the classroom, her instruction was impacted by what Gutierrez et. al (2002) refer to as backlash politics that "prohibit the use of students'

complete linguistic, sociocultural, and academic repertoire in the service of learning” (p. 337). A broader language policy that values bilingualism would have supported Ms. Brown in building upon the linguistic resources that emergent bilingual students brought to the classroom. The possibilities for learning would be expanded if the use of multiple languages in classrooms were not just accepted, but valued and used for instruction.

The benefits of bilingualism have been widely documented (Bialystok, 2004, 2005, 2010; Bialystok & Barac, 2011; Hakuta, 2011), yet despite this knowledge of the cognitive and social benefits of bilingualism, the backlash against bilingual/ multilingual education continues. English-only policies have been passed in many states in light of the English only, anti-immigration political and social climate that have spurred the language debates in the United States (Macedo, 1997). Policies that are enacted should take into account the expansive research that supports the use of students’ native language for learning. Garcia, Jensen, and Scribner (2009) discuss the mismatch between what the research points to as effective practices for helping emergent bilingual students succeed and what is currently being implemented in classrooms due to the policy constraints and refer to it as the “implementation gap”. These types of policies advance systems that promote subtractive bilingualism (Lambert, 1975) for students who could use their native language as a resource for learning.

Findings from this study also indicate that learning is a complex process. Literacy has to be viewed by policy makers and school reformers from a sociocultural perspective and not just a practice that can be measured by taking a test. By viewing literacy in this way, policy makers can make a case for a curriculum that is meaningful, authentic, and

provides opportunities for students to engage in the kind social work evidenced in this study.

Pedagogical Implications for Teachers Working with Emergent Bilinguals

The findings presented in this study point to different possibilities in the instruction of young emergent bilingual students in all-English environments. The following section focuses on providing some suggestions for teachers working in these contexts.

1. Honor students' home language. Students' home language is an important form of support for instruction. Regardless of the language required for instruction, students should be allowed to draw upon their knowledge of multiple languages. Teachers can do this by allowing students to speak their home language while working with other students during the school day. Another way that teachers can support this is by allowing students to tell their stories in their native language during the writing time. This practice can help students develop their literacy as well as affirm their identity (Soltero-González & Reyes, 2012).
2. Provide learning contexts that are collaborative and interactive in nature. Collaborative group work allows students the opportunity to work and receive support from others. Using collaborative groups with emergent bilingual students can also help students with production language abilities by having students who have higher control of the English language serve as models to students who are learning English (Soltero-González & Reyes, 2012).
3. Use locally situated, culturally relevant children's literature (Fránquiz, 2012). Teachers can choose literature that reflects students' culture and language. This

can include having children author books in the classroom or with their families and including those books in the classroom library. In order to affirm students' identities, it is important for students to see themselves in all aspects of school.

4. Teachers can also take steps to learn about the role of family and community experiences on emergent bilingual students' learning development. Teachers can learn and tap into families' vast funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) by conducting home visits and learning about the knowledge in the students' homes. By redefining parental involvement, teachers can seek out ways to learn from the families and engage parents by creating meaningful partnerships with them (Huerta & Brittain, 2010).
5. Teachers can also enact a curriculum that is transformative (Cummins, 2000) in nature. Bigelow, Christiansen, Karp, Miner & Peterson (1994) identify 8 components that should be reflected in classrooms that seek to affirm students' identities while helping them develop a critical perspective. Those 8 components for such a curriculum are 1.) Curriculum should be grounded in the lives of students 2.) Teachers should work to help students develop a critical perspective 3.) Curriculum that is multicultural, antiracist, and pro-justice 4.) Curriculum that is participatory in nature 5.) Classrooms that are hopeful, joyful, kind, and visionary 6.) A strong focus on activism 7.) An academically rigorous curriculum, and 8.) Curriculum and classrooms that are culturally sensitive.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is attributed to the nature of working with very young children. The purpose of this study was to capture the interaction that students were

having with each other. I hoped to learn more about the students through interviews and conversations, but that proved to be a challenge. Although I knew all of the focal students well, I wanted to capture their voices during the interviews. To do this, I designed interview questions to use with them that I believed were appropriate for their age. What I found out was that students' attention was very limited, even in small increments of time and that they were easily distracted. What I found was that I was able to capture their voice through conversations that they had with one another and not necessarily through the interview questions that I had designed.

Another limitation of this investigation was that I was not familiar with children's popular culture. At the beginning of the study, much of the conversations were focused around Monster High and I did not have a frame of reference for what students were discussing. After many hours of research, I was able to establish some basic knowledge about the popular culture characters that they were discussing. Due to this limitation, I was not able to capture the complexity and intentions of the conversations in real time.

Lastly, the case study design of the current investigation also includes some strengths as well as limitations. Due to the low number of students in the study, it is not possible to generalize the findings of this study to other emergent bilingual students. However, case study does provide rich insights into the way that these students participated in the writing workshop. Thus, we are able to learn about the experiences of Maria, Neyda, Lina, Juan, and Pablo and this can be a catalyst to begin discussions about how learning about their individual experiences can help in our collective understanding of the literacy development of emergent bilinguals.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study expands our understanding about how emergent bilingual writers participate in writing events and what resources they draw upon when writing in an English only context. Yet, much remains to be learned about ways to continue to engage emergent bilingual students in meaningful ways. The research reported here was based on documentation of students at the end of their kindergarten year. The length of the study was adequate for describing the ways in which emergent bilingual students participate in writing events and the resources that the students use. However, it was not possible to study how the young writers changed over time. New research should be more longitudinal in nature and study how emergent bilingual students participate in writing events when they are in different contexts. In a study of about writing, the context of the study, the significance of the teacher, and the role that peers must all be considered (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Different classrooms provide different sets of expectations and opportunities in writing experiences for children who navigate two languages.

Additional research would also benefit from a home component. Students see themselves in different ways depending on the context in which they are operating. Although I was able to have contact with all of the parents of the focal students in the study, I did not observe the students in their home. Students were instrumental in helping me to understand the history of the families and language use at home, but they were very hesitant to make any recommendations for instruction for their children at school. A close examination of the literacy practices of both parents and children at home would help to establish a clearer picture of the funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) that students bring to school.

Conclusion

In this study, I was able to see the social world that emergent bilingual students engage in and navigate as they are writing. It was surprising to me to find that these very young students are able to position themselves and others as writers and language users. What is significant about this is that very young students begin to develop their sense of identity early on in their schooling. Students in this study had an understanding of the identities that they could take up during the writing workshop and how others positioned them in certain ways. This was in part due to how school and therefore teachers and students privilege certain resources over others.

It was also encouraging to see how students were able to use their repertoire of linguistic resources despite operating in a restrictive language context. Through this limited use of both languages, I was able to see the possibilities for curriculum that invites the use of multiple languages. Finally, it was powerful to see how an established classroom community inspired students to enact an ethic of care where helping and teaching others became a part of the social work done during the writing time. These acts of helping and teaching became a part of the rich repertoire of resources that students were able to draw upon when writing.

Findings from this study indicate that emergent bilingual students draw from rich social, cultural, and linguistic repertoires as they write. Findings also indicate that issues of power and agency play out as students position themselves within the group based on language proficiency. On the basis of this study, teachers can support students as they draw upon their rich resources by supporting talk in multiple languages in the classroom. This study also demonstrates how the politics of language education impact young

students as they position themselves in the classroom based on the access to linguistic resources. The findings from this study prompt questions about English only policies that deny students the use of their native language as they learn to read and write by challenging deficit perspectives that fail to view students' home language and culture as a resource in learning.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Teacher Initial Interview Questions

Language, Family, and Culture

1. What language (s) do students speak when they are writing?
2. What are your beliefs about students using their home language in the classroom? why or why not? In what context?

Writing

1. How do students learn to write?
2. What opportunities do students in your class have to write?
3. What kind of interactions do students have when they are writing during the writing workshop?
4. How do you respond to students' writing?
5. What do you foster students feeling like they are successful writers?
6. If you had to choose one thing teachers should do when teaching writing, what would it be?

Classroom

1. What do students do in your class if students' need help?
2. How does your class operate during the writing workshop time?

3. What structures do you have in place in your class to help kids when they are writing?
4. What role does the classroom community play when students are writing?

APPENDIX B**Teacher Debrief About Student Writing****Observation of a Single Writing Product (Laman, 2013)**

NAME _____

NAME OF WRITING PROJECT _____

INFORMATION ABOUT THE LANGUAGE(S) CHILD SPEAKS AND/OR WRITES
THAT MAY INFORM MY READING

After reading this piece of writing, what did I learn about this student that I didn't know before?

What lines, words, or ideas stood out to me in this writing that affected me as a reader that I can name for the child? (When you wrote that the "ocean tasted like tears," I had never thought of the ocean that way before, and now I will think of your writing when I get salt water in my mouth.)

Where is the child in the process of writing this piece (collecting, nurturing, drafting, revising, editing, the final published piece)?

What traces of teaching (minilessons/mentor texts) do I see in this writing? (For example, if you have been teaching the importance of sequence in writing directions, do you see evidence of this in the child's writing?)

What risks do I see this writer taking in this piece of writing? (For example, is the student writing in a new genre, about a new topic, using first language, writing more, spelling difficult words, using dialogue, etc?)

Do I see the student's language resources informing this writing? (Does the child write in his home language, use cognates, use first language as a placeholder, use code-switching, write in English with first-language syntax, e.g., The dog old chased me?)

What surface patterns do I notice in this writing? (Note spelling and punctuation patterns. For example, if all words that end in *tion* are spelled *shon*, this would make an important teaching point. If the child is using dialogue but is not yet sure how to use punctuation for

dialogue, take note of this so you can teach this to the student or the whole class, if appropriate.)

What do I notice about grammatical patterns? (Is the student writing pattern sentences, statements only, complex sentences? Again, take notice of patterns.)

What celebrations can I name for this writer?

What teaching points make sense for minilessons? (Is this a pattern across the student's work, or is this something I need to address in an individual writing conference?)

APPENDIX C

Student Interviews

(Adapted from McCarthy, Garcia, Velasquez, Lin, & Guo, 2004)

Language, Family, and Culture

1. What languages do you speak?
2. What languages are spoken at home?
3. Tell me about your family.
4. Tell me what you do when you are not in school.
5. What kind of work do your parents do?
6. Does anyone in your family write? What kinds of things does that person write?

Writing

1. Are you a writer? Why or why not?
2. Do you like to write? How do you know?
3. What do you like to write about?
- 4.. Why do people write?
5. What kinds of writing do you at home?
6. What kinds of writing do you do at school?
7. What language do you speak when you are writing at school?
8. Please show me something that you have written. What do you like about your writing? Who will you share this writing with?

Classroom

1. What do you do if you need help with your writing?
2. Can you talk to other people when you are writing? If so, who do you talk to?

Appendix D

Parent Interview Questions

Language, Family, and Culture

1. What languages do you speak?
2. What languages are spoken at home?
3. Tell me about your family.
4. Tell me what your family does when you are together?
5. What kind of work do you do?

Writing

1. Are you a writer? Why or why not?
2. Do you like to write? H
3. How did you learn to write?
4. What do you like to write about?
- 5.. Why do think it's important for people to be able to write?
6. Can you show me something that you have written here at home? Tell me about it.

Classroom

1. What do you know about your child's writing at school?
2. What do you think is important that your child know how to do in writing?
2. What do you think your child needs to be a successful writer?
3. How can you support your child as he/she is learning to write?

APPENDIX E

Category	Codes within category	Frequency
Linguistic Resources	English/Spanish Vocabulary Clarification	4
	Use of Spanish	126
	Codeswitching	146
	Talking about language	7
	Word Play	10
	Performance/Pretending	4
Topics of Interest	Financial	2
	Gender	17
	Religion	3
	Writing Topics	41
	Student Experiences	159
	-with friends	4
	-about school	29
	-going places	16
	-family/home	103
	Technology	10
	Popular Culture	131
	Boogie Man	12
	Singing	33
Adopting a Collaborative Stance	Seeking help from each other	40
	Students reading aloud their writing	11
	Discussion about illustrations	228
	Narrating Progress	8
	Student Feedback	16
	Student questions to each other	18
	Helping Each Other	44
	Students Teaching Each Other	16
Social Affiliation	Warning each other	9
	You are in my story	39
	You are not in my story	4
	You are doing your job	2
	You are not doing your job	4

	Eating lunch	7
	Ownership of writing tools/materials/crayons	205
	Talking about feelings	4
	Disagreement among students	55
	Competition	30
	You can't do that at school	9
	Students telling each other what to do	81
	Telling the teacher	28
	Getting in trouble	12
	Seeking approval from other students	12
	Mediating relationships	9
Student Self-talk	Student self talk	69
Teacher Talk	Teacher Directions	33
	Seeking Teacher Approval	7
	Teacher feedback	30
	Students questions to teacher	18
	Teacher questions	50
	Seeking help from teacher	19
	-with mechanics	3
	-with spelling	12
	-with drawing	2
	Teacher Instruction	77
	-drawing	3
	-writing topics	4
	-does it make sense?	4
	-mechanics of writing	25
	-spelling	34
	-adding details	10